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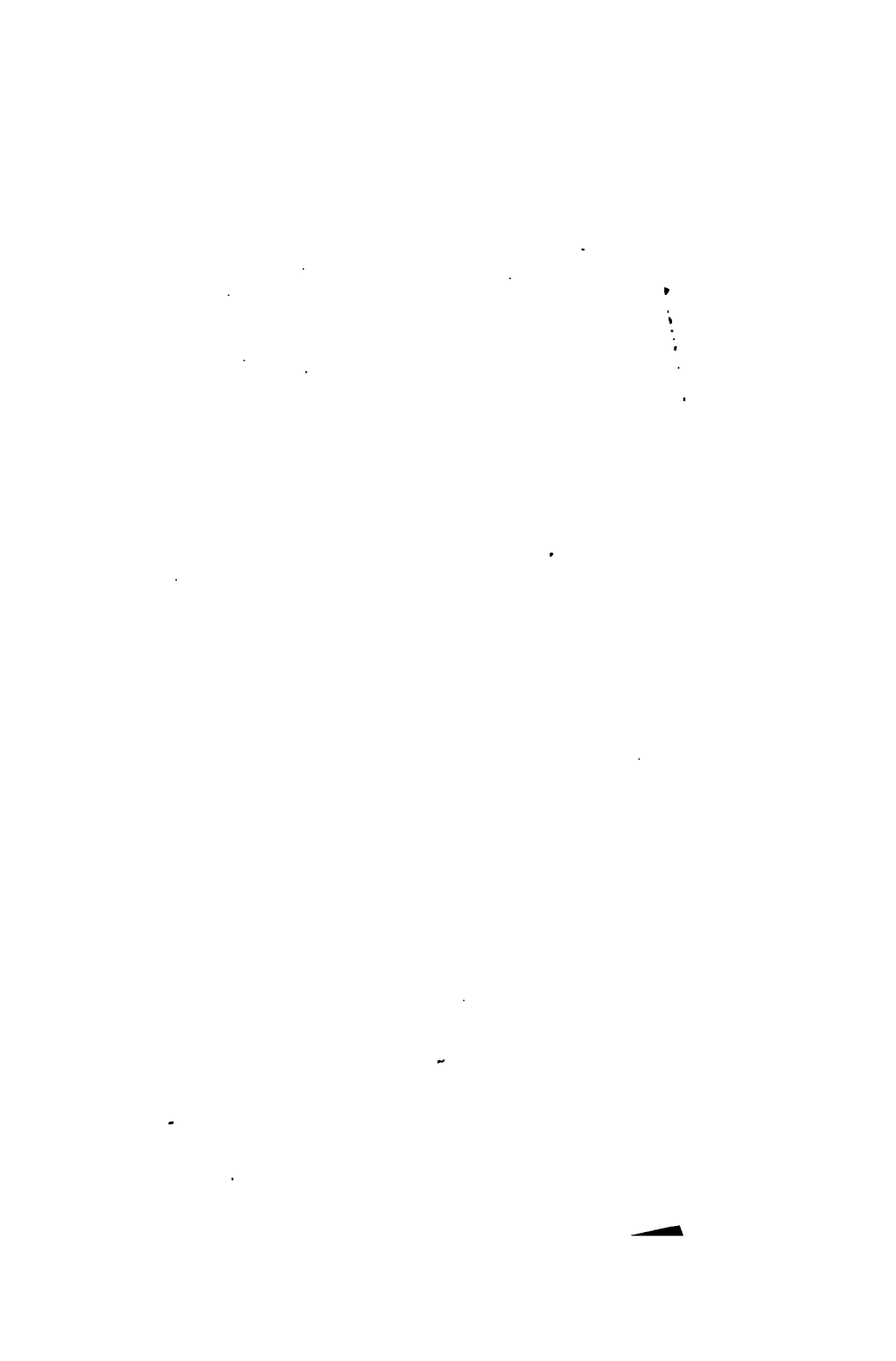






THE PERILS OF THE NATION.





THE PERILS OF THE NATION.

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“THE danger is wider, deeper, fiercer,” said Lord Ashley in a late debate in the House of Commons, “and no one who has heard these statements, and believes them, can hope that twenty years more will pass without some mighty convulsion, some displacement of the whole system of society.” *

These words had, indeed, a peculiar application to the existing want of education among the labouring classes ; but no one would be less disposed than their noble author, to limit his view to a single point, when contemplating the whole condition of the country. None could be less likely than Lord Ashley, to commit the error of imagining that any *one* remedy could terminate a state of things so

* Debate : House of Commons, Feb. 28, 1843.

fearful ; or that by a single Act of Parliament, the labouring population could be raised from their present misery to a state of comfort and happiness.

But this fearful state of things was not only distinctly declared by his Lordship,—it was admitted by the silent assent of the whole body of the Representatives of the people. Neither the leaders of the Government, who would doubtless have eagerly denied the truth of the representation, if it could have been denied,—nor the heads of any of the great interests, landed, commercial, or manufacturing,—no one of all these ventured to stand up in his place, and contest the appalling statements of the noble Lord. On the contrary, every speaker, of whatever party or section of the House, explicitly admitted the case to be as it had been represented, and divers of them even added strength to the statements by allusions to facts which had come within their own knowledge. A single point, adverted to by Mr. Gladstone, in another night's debate, casts a fearful light over the whole subject,—a light which illustrates, while it renders the picture even still more appalling. He observed,

that "It was one of the most melancholy features in the social state of the country,—that while there was a decrease in the consuming powers of the people, and an *increase in the privations and distress* of the labouring and operative classes ; there was at the same time a constant *accumulation of wealth* in the upper classes, and a constant *increase of capital*." * This testimony is most true, and the fact is a startling one. From the opposite side of the house the same language is heard. "We see extreme destitution throughout the industrious classes, and at the same time, incontestible evidences of vast wealth rapidly augmenting." † Nothing could possibly show with more clearness, the existence of some great disease, pervading the whole body politic ; and turning growth into plethora, and increasing wealth into increasing danger.

But how shall we detect the real character of the malady, without which detection all propositions of a remedy must be so many guesses in the dark ? Can there be a more obvious or reasonable course, than to follow the line of

* House of Commons, Feb. 14, 1843.

† Mr. C. Buller, House of Commons, April 7.

thought suggested by Mr. Gladstone ; who points to the notorious and undeniable fact, that while the opulence of the wealthy shows a constant and visible growth and increase ; that advancement, so far from being shared by the labouring classes, is accompanied by a manifest depression of their condition ; and an “ increase in their privations and distress.”

If we are struck and penetrated by this fact as we ought to be, we shall not be able to avoid asking, in the next moment, whether some cause for this lamentable contrast cannot be discovered. Causes, indeed, in abundance, are daily being adduced ; but chiefly by heated partizans of this or that interest. Swarms of writers on the one side are strenuously insisting that the whole blame rests with the landed aristocracy ; while the friends of the agricultural interest are equally certain that the rise of an overgrown manufacturing system has been the chief cause of our present perilous condition. There is no doubt that on each side there is a certain quantum of truth ; for mere, naked, unmixed falsehood would scarcely be tolerated. But both parties seem to forget, that “ *half the truth is a lie ;*” and

that the supposition that some thousands of Englishmen, merely from having invested their property in land, (or in factories, as the case may be) have thereby become of a different character from all other Englishmen, is one intrinsically unreasonable.

We must not, therefore, if we wish to arrive at truth in this important enquiry,—we must not hastily adopt the views of either of the “great interests” in this matter ; or fancy, that upon the landed aristocracy, alone or chiefly,—or upon the mill-owners, in any sole or principal degree,—lies the whole burden of the guilt of our present state and its attendant perils.

But if we repudiate the idea of discovering the cause of our alarming circumstances, in any one corner of the realm, or in any one class among the people, is it likely that we shall be able to fix upon any large or more generally-operating principle, which has thus extensively disorganized the fabric of society among us ?

We do not think that there will be any considerable difficulty in thus detecting the root of the evil. Mr. Gladstone’s own language

furnishes us with a very obvious clue. "While the privations and distress of the labouring classes have increased ; the wealth of the upper classes has been constantly accumulating, and the CAPITAL of those classes, constantly augmenting." How has this happened ?

"How has it happened ?" Strange ! that such a question should be asked ! The answer lies upon the surface ; it is open to every man's view ;—though, in this as in other cases, the answer which is most obvious is often the last that is thought of : It has happened, *because we have been labouring that it should happen*. The wealth of the wealthy has accumulated ; because all legislation has made this its chief object. CAPITAL has increased ; because statesmen and legislators and public writers have all imagined, that the increase of capital was the *summum bonum* of human existence. The poor have not advanced, along with the rich, because no one has thought it desirable that they should. Desirable, we mean, politically speaking ; for many of those who have discountenanced all legislation in behalf of the poor, have been personally humane,

and have afforded them many *good wishes*, and even many charitable donations. But the prevalent doctrine has been, that CAPITAL was the object to be chiefly desiderated ; and that the wiser course with “ POPULATION,” (meaning thereby, the labouring poor,) was to employ “ the *Preventive* check.” Encouragement for “ Capital ; ” prevention for “ Population,” these have been the two leading ideas with statesmen and legislators for the last thirty years. They have now succeeded in their object. They have immensely increased the growth of Capital ; and *pari passu*, the growth of misery and distress also. And the end of their success is a public acknowledgment, that if some stop be not put to the existing mischiefs, a few years more must land us in a bloody revolution !

Have we misrepresented this fatal system ? On the contrary, a single quotation will prove the truth of the above representation. One of the most eminent and popular of modern writers on these subjects,—one whose labours have been held to entitle her to a provision from the public treasury, —we mean Miss Martineau, —calmly puts the sentiment we have been

describing into the lips of her *beau idéal* of a wise and benevolent manufacturer.

“ We (the manufacturers) do what we can for you, in *increasing the capital* on which you are to subsist ; and you must do the rest, by *proportioning your numbers* to the means of subsistence.” *

Here the two grand objects are distinctly and frankly described. The great duty of the masters,—the beginning and ending of their active benevolence, is to be, the increase of their own capital. In doing this, says the kind factory-owner, “ we are doing *all we can* for you.” Then the great duty of the labourers, on the other hand, is to practise the *Preventive Check* ; i. e. *not to have children* ! Such are the leading maxims inculcated by the highest authorities in political economy, and honoured and rewarded by statesmen of all classes ; and that which we are now reaping, in peril and in suffering, is nothing else than the fair, legitimate result of these maxims and these practices.

The reply, then, to the demand, How comes all this misery and all this alarm ? is

* *The Manchester Strike*: By H. Martineau, p. 101.

one easily given, and given on grounds which cannot be disputed. It attaches the blame to no one great interest in the state,—landed, commercial, or manufacturing, but shares the guilt among them all ; and not among them only, for it includes all in authority, legislators, statesmen, and divines ; only making, in justice, a few honourable exceptions in every class.

The great cause of the whole evil is to be found in the general adoption of false principles ; inculcated, it is true, in the first instance, by men of talent and apparent skill, but eagerly seized upon, and their promulgation rewarded, by men of influence and consideration among all classes.

The nature of the master-error was discernible, fifty years ago, in the erroneous drift and object of Adam Smith's great work ; which treated of " the *wealth* of nations," when " the *happiness* of nations " would have been the wiser and more Christian topic of investigation.* The distinction is all-im-

* This remark, often made by the late Michael Thomas Sadler in his conversations in literary circles, was adopted and elaborated into an article in the *Quarterly Review*, Vol. xli. pp. 46—54.

portant ; and the error branches forth into a thousand departments of evil. Take a single instance. A century back, England was full of small farms. A thousand acres would then be parcelled out into twelve tenancies, of various extent ; and among the twelve, fifty-eight labourers would be employed. But in comes the Political Economist, and argues that large farms conduce most to “ the *wealth* of nations,” meaning thereby, the growth of *capital*. Accordingly, the twelve little cultivators are gradually dispossessed, and one great farmer monopolizes the 1000 acres, employing only *fifteen* labourers, where before there were *fifty-eight*.* Thus forty-three working men are driven away from their cottages, and forced into the towns to seek for employment ; —but then a larger surplus is obtained, and thus “ CAPITAL ” is augmented.

So works the poison in every department. Through every class the false principle is inculcated,—that the heaping together *capital* is not only the chief duty, but that it includes and sums up in itself every other duty.

The following out this principle in every

* *Labourer's Friend Magazine*, Jan. 1842, p. 3.

department has just made England one vast mass of superficial splendour, covering a body of festering misery and discontent. "Side by side appear, in fearful and unnatural contrast, the greatest amount of opulence, and the most appalling mass of misery."* Yet what a country is it to be cast into such circumstances! How simple seems the way, to the immediate banishment of poverty, and discontent, and crime. While some men, for their own selfish purposes, are representing the land as unable to feed its people, Mr. Alison, who is not usually considered an ignoramus, has demonstrated that "on the most *moderate* calculation, Great Britain and Ireland are capable of maintaining, in ease and affluence, one hundred and twenty millions of inhabitants."† If any one, however, notwithstanding the respectability of Mr. Alison's name, should be inclined to put from him this statement as quite incredible,—let him ponder over a single case, published in the *Labourer's Friend Magazine*, with name, place, and every needful particular:—

* Speech of Mr. Buller, April 6, 1843.

† Alison's *Principles of Population*, Vol. I. p. 51.

“ Samuel Bridge, of Stock-green, near Feckenham, in the county of Worcester, has occupied four acres of very inferior stiff clay land, on the Blue Lias, for twenty-seven years. He grows two acres of wheat, and two acres of potatoes every year, and sells all his produce—even his wheat-straw. The stubble from the wheat, and the tops from the potatoes, serve to bed down his pigs; and the manure from this source, and from his privy, is all that he gets for the use of his farm.

“ The crops obtained are not at all extraordinary for the results of spade husbandry; but it is very extraordinary that such crops, with so little manure, and from bad land, could have been obtained for a quarter of a century together; and, coupling the duration of the operation with the quality of the land, it must be admitted that nothing more is needed to prove the superiority of the spade system over the plough system; for, although the same crops are obtainable by the plough on good land, it is quite certain that the plough would fail to compete with the spade on equal qualities of soil.

“ The produce obtained on the average of

a quarter of a century, by this exemplary man, is twelve tons of potatoes per acre, and forty bushels of wheat per acre, and the following account may be taken as a close approximation to the truth.

Sold annually,	£.	s.	d.
24 Tons of Potatoes, at £2. 10s. per ton	60	0	0
80 Bushels of Wheat, at 7s	28	0	0
4 Tons Wheat Straw, 50s.	10	0	0
	<hr/>		
Deduct as under,	£.	s.	d.
Manual wages, at £4. 6s. 4d. per			
acre, per annum	17	5	4
Seed Potatoes for two acres	5	0	0
4 Bushels Seed Wheat (being dibbed)			
at 7s. 6d.	1	10	0
	<hr/>		
	23	15	4
Subject to Rent and Parochial Payments	£74	4	8

“ It may be safely stated that the average of all the land in England, under cultivation, does not yield 5*l.* per acre gross produce, and also that 20*s.* per acre per annum, is more than is paid in manual wages ; whereas in this case, off very inferior land, above 28*l.* per acre gross produce is obtained, and 4*l.* 6*s.* 4*d.* per acre per annum paid in manual wages ; or, in other words, you get by the spade, on small allotments, near six times as

much produce, and employ four times as many people, as by the plough.”*

There is not the slightest difficulty, then, in drawing from the land of England, three or four times as much good solid food, as its present population could consume. If this would be abundance, (and if not, what is the meaning of the term?)—then abundance, in the fullest sense of the word, is within our reach.

Yet, notwithstanding this, we keep, at the present moment, a very large proportion of our labouring poor in abject poverty and misery, and very naturally, in rankling discontent!

One class of writers will instantly reply, “Yes, that is one of the consequences of our deplorable manufacturing system.”

But may we not trace the evil somewhat higher? How comes it that our great factory towns grow to such frightful size. Manchester and Glasgow, with their vice and their disease, cannot keep up their own population. Cut off supplies of fresh labourers from without, and these towns, in sixty years, would be without inhabitants. They are fed and swollen up to their present enormous size, and filled

* *Labourer's Friend Magazine*, 1842. p. 183.

with an excessive number of labourers, depressing each other's wages, by the constant immigration of the villagers. But how come the villagers to leave their green fields and purer air, to immure themselves in the fœtid lanes of factory-towns? Simply because, in the villages, they are reckoned "surplus,"—are half-starved,—are driven about from farmer to overseer, and from their miserable huts to union-workhouses, until life is rendered a burden to them, and they crowd into the towns, to embrace a kind of labour to which they are quite unaccustomed, merely because it seems to promise some sort of shelter and food for their offspring:—while thus to "get rid" of them, is reckoned a matter of rejoicing—aye, of actual *rejoicing*! on the part of the gentry and farmers among whom they have dwelt! We have often overheard, with silent horror, long contentions between adjoining parishes, touching which of them a hearty, sober, well-conducted labourer "belonged to;" and when, at some expense for lawyers, one of the parishes had "saddled" him upon the other, great was the joy at "having *got rid* of him." We have listened to these contentions, and we

have said to ourselves, “How can England ever be aught but wretched and discontented, in such a state of things?”

Augment your capital : *prevent* your population ;—these are the two main principles on which all modern doctors and statesmen have founded their system and their practice. They have carried them far enough to fill the island with wretchedness ; and yet they dare not carry them fully out.

Is not improvidence a fault ?—they ask,—can it be right in a man who is scarcely able to feed himself, to marry, and to expose himself to the probable result of having six or eight other mouths to feed, upon six or eight shillings per week ?

We admit the lamentable nature of the case ;—but we ask our mentors to test their own principles by carrying them boldly into practice.

It is wrong, you say, in a poor labourer, who can scarcely feed and clothe himself, to marry. If it be *wrong*—clearly *wrong* ; we know not why it should not be made penal by law. You reply, that this you would gladly see done ; but lack courage to propose

it; and therefore are driven to rely chiefly upon little tracts and books, teaching "the principles of population."* *This*, however, you will not attempt to deny—that you would be glad if, either by law, or by the influence of instruction, all "improvident marriages" could be put an end to: and you would certainly reckon it improvident in an agricultural labourer, only earning six, seven, or eight shillings a week, to expose himself to the probability of having half-a-dozen children.

We ask, then, the very obvious and plain question,—Would you wish all the young men now growing up to manhood in our agricultural districts, to remain unmarried? for most of these are quite unable to earn more than this poor pittance! And were your wish obeyed, what sort of a state do you imagine that England would be in, in point of morals, at the end of seven years? You have been preaching against marriage, and discounte-

* Such as *John Hopkins' Notions: Cousin Marshall*, &c. Mr. McCulloch, in his evidence before a Parliamentary Committee, advised "the introduction into parish schools, of books teaching the *elementary principles of population and wages*."

nancing marriage, for the last thirty years ; and already you have filled our villages with bastardy and child-murder ; but were you to carry your principles thoroughly and honestly out, do you imagine that the country could be lived in, by any decent people ?

This one question ought to satisfy any reasonable man, that the whole system which has been so long in fashion, is founded in error, and that our only course is to adopt a totally different one. We have seen that the land can with ease produce abundance for every person in the realm : why then are want and wretchedness so predominant among the industrious classes ?

The false principles so long prevalent have led, in practice, to the striking away all the lower rounds of the ladder. The little farmer, the happy cotter, are systematically cast out of the system ; and nothing is left, and nothing is desiderated, by the advocates of this system, but the farmer of 1000 acres, and the day-labourer, cast wholly upon his mercy.

It is both touching and instructive, to remark the misgivings of a kind-hearted man, even when embarked in the prevalent system,

and assuming that system to be the best that can be devised. Mr. Twisleton, one of the commissioners whose report is given in the recent "Sanitary Enquiry," thus writes :

"It is difficult, regarding the paucity of small farms from another point of view, not to give way to a feeling of regret. The English agricultural labourer, *even if he has transcendant abilities*, has scarcely *any prospect* of rising in the world, and of becoming a small farmer. He commences his career as a weekly labourer, and the probability is, *whatever his talents and industry*, that as a weekly labourer he will end his days. If he cherishes the ambition of becoming a small farmer, his wisest course is to emigrate to Canada or New South Wales, or some other of the colonies, where alone he can put forth all his energies for the attainment of that object with a reasonable prospect of success."*

Does not this complete the picture? The doctrine of the criminality of "improvident" marriages, if it were possible to bring it into force, would condemn *seven-eighths* of the young men of our agricultural districts to

* *Sanitary Enquiry*: Local Reports, p. 142.

hopeless celibacy for life. And then comes the Commissioner, and with a sigh of natural feeling, admits that, *whether married or unmarried*, life affords no ray of hope for them. Ploughing and harrowing machines they are, and nothing else can they ever be. No matter how “transcendant their abilities” may be ; no matter what their “talents or industry ;” the sum total of human existence, for them, consists in something less of enjoyment and more of care, than marks the life of one of the horses with which they plough the fields. Toil, regular, unceasing, toil ; food, poor in quality and deficient in quantity ; scarcely clothes enough to cover them ; and but a miserable hut to shelter them ; thus must pass some sixty years of the labourer’s life, and then, when capable of enduring such a life no longer, there remains,

‘in age the workhouse :
A parish shell at last, and the little bell,
Tolled hastily for a pauper’s funeral.’

Such is the state, and such the prospects, to which the modern system of political economy would deliberately consign the great

body of our agricultural poor. To expect that men above the rank of idiots should quietly and peaceably settle down in such a condition, would be a degree of folly not lightly to be imputed to any man. The fact is, as a glance at the state of the country will shew,—that the pressure of this system drives thousands out of the villages into the manufacturing towns ; throngs these with unemployed hands, and thus artificially and most injuriously depresses wages. Meantime, of those which remain, multitudes, wretched, hopeless, and reckless, indulge in poaching, smuggling, and often, in their blind revenge, in rick-burning. Such is the natural result of striving to place the farm-labourer in a lower rank than any other class in the whole community,—a rank to which marriage is forbidden, as “ improvident,”—a rank to which

‘ Hope never comes, that comes to all.’

But why need we thus stifle the best feelings of our nature, and “grind the faces of the poor” upon principle and upon system ? All the evidence that can be obtained, goes to prove, that little more is wanted, but the restoration of

the lower rounds of the ladder, to cure the whole mischief of which we have been speaking. Instances might be adduced, not by scores, but by thousands, in which the farm-labourers of a district have been rapidly up-raised from misery and vice to good conduct and happiness, by the mere return to the dictates of common sense and common humanity. Take the poor helpless, hopeless day-labourer, just subsisting on his seven shillings per week ; and offer him a quarter, or a half acre of land, at a moderate rent. Even this first step instantly changes the whole man. To gain and to retain this simple and uncostly boon, he will become at once sober, frugal, and most industrious. You have rekindled hope in his bosom : once more some little advance appears possible. And how rapidly this hope is realized, might be shown by a variety of instances :—we shall quote only one or two.

“ One of my old tenants,” says a correspondent of the *Labourers’ Friend Magazine*, “ called upon me to tell me how he got on. I had let him a *quarter of an acre* of land. He was always an industrious man, and he got on first to five acres, then to ten, and then

he stopped for some time. His industry and prudence were attended with success, and having the opportunity, he took a farm of thirty acres, to which twenty more were afterwards added ; so that when I last saw him, he had fifty acres of land, well-stocked and well cultivated ; and was, in every respect, a thriving, respectable farmer, who had risen by industry, honesty, prudence, and perseverance, from an allotment-tenant of a quarter of an acre.”*

The case of Samuel Bridge has been already quoted. He at first rented “four acres of very inferior land.” The advocates of the modern system would say, that it was impossible for him to do any good with such a piece of land as this. But what was the fact? Beginning as a tenant, he soon saved enough from the profits of his four acres, to *buy the freehold*. “He has also built himself a comfortable cottage and outbuildings thereon, and is the owner of considerable property besides.”† And all this, out of an allotment of four acres of inferior land. In the same spirit, a poor labourer, who, from his large family, and fre-

* *Labourers' Friend Magazine*, p. 61. † *Ibid.* p. 165.

quent want of work, was a great burden to a parish in Buckinghamshire,—recently answered some of the authorities who were reproaching him with the expence his family had been, “Only let me have six acres of land at the price which the farmers pay for it, and neither I nor any of my family will ever ask the parish for another penny!”

The main thing which our labouring poor require, to restore them to their ancient happiness and good character, is *hope*; a hope founded on a reasonable prospect of advancement. No other class in the community is denied this privilege. The labourer in trade or manufactures, if he possess abilities, talents and industry, knows that he may look forward to a moment when his foot may be placed in the next round of the ladder; and sees around him instances not a few, of men who have raised themselves from the very lowest rank, to wealth, and honour, and influence. It is only the poor agricultural labourer of whom it can be said, that “whatever his talents and industry,” nay, however “transcendant his abilities,” “a weekly labourer he began, and a weekly labourer he will end his days.” It

is only of the poor husbandman that the rule holds good,—that “improvident marriages are criminal,” and that with him marriage can *never* be any thing else than improvident!

It is with this class, therefore, that we ought to begin. Until some large and efficient change takes place here, the general condition of the country must remain one of disorganization and peril. The perspicacious mind of Sadler at once discerned this; and he had no sooner laid before Parliament his demand for Poor-laws for Ireland, and his claim for protection for the poor factory-children, than he immediately followed these propositions by a third, for the amelioration of the condition of the agricultural poor.

All these three measures stood intimately connected, and each was commended to the Legislature on the same two-fold ground. Each might be claimed on the score of humanity; and each was based on a clear economical necessity. How could the labouring poor of England prosper, or hope to gain a fair remuneration for their labour, while vast crowds of unemployed and starving labourers from a neighbouring island, the soil of which

acknowledged no obligation to support them, were constantly flooding the market for labour? Or how could our factory towns be in a healthy state, while the masters persisted in compelling, even in the case of children, every six labourers to do the work of *ten*? The inevitable force of these arguments has been in some degree felt; and the land of Ireland has been rendered liable to the support of its own poor; while some check has been imposed on the cupidity of the mill-owners. The third measure, however, was always felt by Mr. Sadler to be of at least equal value with the former two. How can over-production in our manufacturing districts be checked, —how can the labour-market be restored to a healthy state, so long as the owners and occupiers of land persist in rendering the life of the agricultural labourer one scene of misery and wretchedness, without consolation and without hope? So long as they continue to tear down the cottages, and to drive the people into the towns, rejoicing when they have “got rid” of them, so long must England remain in an unhealthy and perilous condition.


And what a prodigious class of our people

is it, whom we thus condemn to hopeless misery ! The cultivators of the soil are, after all, our main population. They cover the whole country, filling all our villages, and supporting more than half our towns. They not only greatly exceed in number the labourers in mines, or the work-people in factories, or the artisans in shops, but they are far more numerous than all these classes taken together. It is with the largest section of our population that we are dealing, when we quietly tell them, to use Mr. Twisleton's words, that "if they cherish the ambition" of ever rising above the rank of a day-labourer of seven or eight shillings per week, their "wisest course is to emigrate to Canada or New South Wales," for that in England no hope rests upon their lot !

We have dwelt more than we intended, on this single point ; believing, indeed, that it lays at the basis of all sound legislation for the improvement of our people. But we by no means wish to represent this, any more than any other *single* point, as comprising all that is wrong, or its rectification as implying that all will in future be right. We only say,

that wherever else we turn, this mischief is sure to follow and to meet us. In a variety of ways, the employer has, at this moment, the power, (and too often most remorselessly uses that power,) of tyrannizing over those whom he employs. But the grand secret of his power lies in the pressure on the labour-market ; and this pressure is chiefly caused by the circumstances we have indicated. A master exacts cruel terms of his workmen. How gains he the power so to do ? From the knowledge the workman has, that if he resists, and leaves his employment, crowds of unemployed hands are ready to contend for his place ; and that thus, while a quarrel may reduce *him* to starvation, it can hardly expose his master even to inconvenience. But these crowds of candidates for employment are chiefly composed of men expelled from the rural districts,—men of whom the farmers and landowners are delighted to have “ got rid ; ” not because they are vicious, but because they choose to imagine them “ surplus.”

We place this matter, then, at the basis of all necessary legislation. But upon it must be reared a superstructure of many parts. The



false notion, of the necessity of protecting capital, and of favouring its accumulation, must be abandoned ; and we must learn that it is industry, not wealth, that needs protection ; and that capital requires rather to be restrained from tyrannizing over industry, than encouraged in its arbitrary course. The whole course of modern science tends to make this restraint more and more needful. The vast and almost boundless improvements in machinery, all give power to the capitalist, and render the workman more and more helpless and dependent. These, among other reasons, should satisfy us *on which side* the legislator is bound to interfere.

Since the following pages were written, fresh details of suffering and oppression have been given to the public, in the "Second Report of the Children's Employment Commission." Out of a mass of horrors, of almost endless variety, we select a single case.

Frederick Tyrrell, Esq. surgeon to St. Thomas's Hospital, deposes, that "A fair and delicate girl, about seventeen years of age, was brought to him, in consequence of total loss of vision. On examination, both eyes

were found disorganized, and recovery therefore was hopeless. She had been an apprentice as a dress-maker at the west end of the town; and some time before her vision became affected, her general health had been materially deranged from too close confinement and excessive work. The immediate cause of the disease in the eyes was excessive and continued application to making mourning. She stated that she had been compelled to remain without changing her dress for *nine days and nights* consecutively; that during this period she had been permitted only occasionally to rest on a mattress placed on the floor for an hour or two at a time; and that her meals were placed at her side, cut up, so that as little time as possible should be spent in their consumption." And thus, in this as in other cases adduced in the same report. the hopes and happiness of a poor girl's life were deliberately sacrificed, in the cold-blooded determination to exact from *one* labourer what should have been allotted to *two*.

Now had this employer, in a fit of passion, deprived the poor girl of her sight by a blow, she would quickly have been brought under

the notice of the law, and would have suffered heavily, both in purse and person. Yet the guilt of destroying the eyes of her apprentice in cold blood, and by a process of nine days' continuance, is certainly greater, far greater, than can attach to any single act of violence. The cruelty, the hard-heartedness, must be inconceivably more intense. Why, then, is it, that such acts are permitted to go unpunished? Why should the *system* of oppression remain untouched by any attempt at legislation?

The only answer to these questions which has ever been given, is the *cant*, (there is no other phrase so applicable,) of "non-interference between labourer and employer." This plea, be it observed, is always advanced by the very parties whose misdeeds call for coercion. Very many employers of work-people have seats in Parliament; and with one consent these are always found to rise in their places, and to denounce the idea of "interfering" between the master and his workmen.

Their objections are learnedly expressed, and profess to deal with "general principles." But the whole plea is the most illegitimate possible. It amounts to this. "We, by the

power of our capital, have got a great and almost despotic authority over our workmen. Do not deprive us of it. We *like* power, (as who does not,) especially the power of getting money. Therefore we contend, that it is most improper for the Legislature to interfere between us and our workmen." Such is the argument, or rather the outcry, on one side; the other side,—that of the workmen, is unheard in Parliament, except by a few petitions. The wealthy masters have power and influence; the poor workmen have neither the one nor the other.

Hitherto, capital, being the favourite of the legislature, has enjoyed all the protection, influence, and authority, that the law could give it. Many, perhaps most of those, who thus leant to the side of the strongest, believed that they were consulting the general weal in what they did. There was also the inner motive, which they doubtless tried to conceal from themselves,—that they were consulting *their own interest*. We need not, however, trouble ourselves with men's motives: our leading assertion, and the motive for the present volume, is, that however capital may have prospered,

the nation, in a most important point, *has declined and decayed*. Once more to cite Mr. Gladstone,—there has been “an accumulation of wealth ;” but there has also been “an increase of the privations and distress of the labouring classes.” We place this before the eyes of our countrymen ;—we repeat it in their ears again and again. And we add also, what, indeed, seems almost self-evident,—that there must be some great fundamental change ; the adoption of some *other* system of legislation than that which has borne sway for some years past,—before the country can be restored to internal peace, or blessed with settled tranquillity.

To what practical result, then, do our observations tend ?

To the inculcation, as a general principle, of a totally different set of ideas from those which have long borne sway among us. Instead of yielding undue sway to capital, we would watch its motions with jealousy, and rather fetter it by restrictions, than yield it an arbitrary and irresponsible power. To industry, on the other hand, we would hold out

a helping hand. *Here*, protection is often needed. Go where we will, whether in the mine, the factory, the milliner's workshop, or the large farm, we are sure to find capital tyrannizing over it. *Everywhere* excessive labour is prescribed, or a reduction of wages enforced,—there being always the simple alternative, “ These are my terms ; comply with them, or *starve* ! ”

In a variety of ways, then, legislation may, and ought to interfere. It ought to say to the factory-owner, You shall not work little children fourteen or fifteen hours per day. It ought to say to the coal-owner, You shall not send girls and boys of five years old into the coal-pit. It ought, and it *has*, said this. But in a multitude of other departments, capital requires to be followed, and watched, and threatened with penal consequences. There ought to be no shrinking, no holding back from this duty. Recently, fresh Reports of the Commissioners of Enquiry have brought to light fresh enormities. But of what avail the knowledge, if practical relief is not immediately afforded ?

Legislation, however, can only deal in generals, and it is slow in its movements.

Out of the above-named principles, a variety of practical and personal obligations arise. The leading idea, that labouring industry, in these days, always needs protection, while capital,—i. e. *wealth*,—needs none, but rather requires restraint; will guide us to the solution of a multitude of questions. In the first place, however, let us strive to make it thoroughly understood, that in England we have the two great requisites,—plenty of fertile land, and millions of willing labourers;—and that if only these two could be brought together, the result might be that which is recorded of the chosen people of God, of whom it is said, that “Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry.” (1 Kings iv. 20.)

Why should not this be said of the people of England? The chief obstacle in the way is, the prevalence of false principles; hindering the owners and occupiers of the soil from seeing and understanding their real interest and their bounden duty. Within ten miles of the metropolis in which these pages are published, there may be seen thousands of

that the only remedy for this state of things is to be found in measures of practical improvement; and if the condition of the people is not made better, I doubt if any existing power can stop the demand for organic change." *

And again, " If humanity does not induce us to do our utmost for this object, a mere politic view of our own interests should compel us: for depend upon it the people of this country will not bear what they used to bear; and every one of these periods of distress is fraught with increasingly dangerous effects on the popular temper, and with increasing peril to the interests of property and order. If you mean to keep government or society together in this country, *you must do something to render the condition of the people less uneasy and precarious than it now is.*" †

* Speech of Sir J. Hanmer, in House of Commons, March 30, 1843.

† Speech of Mr. C. Buller, April 6, 1843.


CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS material world did not, by any chance medley, spring into existence. Nations do not grow up like vegetables, obliged by an immutable law to progress towards maturity, flourish for an assigned space, droop, decay, perish, and make room for others. From these simple propositions if any dissent, we despair of coming to a right understanding with them ; for we proceed on the assumption that all visible things were created by an invisible Almighty Being, great in counsel, and wonderful in operation ; who spake and it was done ; he commanded, and it stood fast. Man, the crowning work of this creative miracle, was placed in authority over all inferior things, and commanded to bear rule, according to the

will of his Creator. What that will might be, he was not left to discover, groping his way, by some laborious process of deduction, from mysterious premises to an uncertain conclusion : a revelation was vouchsafed, affording him every needful help : and, to leave him without excuse if he should presume to seek out inventions, independent of the rules thus laid down, it pleased God to become in an especial manner the King of a peculiar people among the families of the earth, whom he formed into a nation, placed under a theocracy, and worked out for them the details of a faultless government, the leading principles of which are recorded for the instruction of such as may be appointed to rule in the nations of the earth.

But man is a proud creature : nothing is more distasteful to him than to walk in a way ready traced out, even though infinite wisdom, guided by infinite love, have shaped that perfect path. When man had but one commandment to keep, he, of wilful rebellion, broke it : he left a road of sunshine and of flowers, leading to eternal life, to strike into one strewn with thorns, over-canopied with tem-




pests, and issuing in everlasting death. What marvel that as laws multiplied upon him, the hydra-formed spirit of disobedience should reduplicate every head subjected to the stroke of the Law-giver?—that every “You shall,” from the mouth of the Creator, should be responded to by a stubborn ‘I will not,’ from the presumptuous lip of the creature!

From the day that sin entered into the world, peril, visible and invisible, temporal and eternal, has been man’s comrade through the whole course of his pilgrimage. He loves to talk of security, to dream of prosperity and triumph; in adverse seasons to assure himself that the calamity is but for a moment, and in prosperous hours to vaunt that “to-morrow shall be as to-day, and yet more abundant.” This propensity is developed in the national, no less than in the individual character, and perhaps among nations nowhere does there exist a more inveterate determination to persist in saying, “Peace and safety,” than in England.

A few months ago, what would have been the general reply to a hint that peril of formidable aspect impended over our favoured

land? 'England in peril! Is not all within her peace—her foreign relations those of unbroken amity? The sound of war comes but from the extremities of the earth, where her forces wage it against enemies who, if even able to defend their own territories, cannot menace her's. Her empire is gigantic, her authority unresisted, her wealth enormous; increasing luxury among the mercantile classes bears witness to augmented capital; the metropolis daily puts forth new links, connecting with it the surrounding hamlets, and swallowing up all intervening space in its huge sea of brick and mortar; and beyond them, every available spot is laid hold on for the erection of handsome dwelling-houses. Nor in London alone, but throughout the land this feature prevails so extensively, that the inhabitant of any considerable town, who has left for a year or two his place of abode, returning, is perplexed by the rapidity of these changes, altering the face of the country. The meadow where he roamed to gather wild flowers, or to angle in the quiet stream, is become a pleasure-ground, attached to some showy mansion, closed to his approach: the waste



green where cricket-matches were wont to be decided, is studded with handsome tenements, and lotted out into gardens ; intersected too perhaps by some railway, the unceasing traffic on which yields further testimony, that while with one class business is sufficiently brisk to keep them constantly in motion, with others money is plentiful enough to send them in perpetual quest of the gratifications that change of place supplies. The general aspect of society, thus glanced on, is that of a people dwelling every man under the shadow of his own home-tree, and none making them afraid.'

But, correct as this description might be, the peril existed ; and an outburst of popular violence, sufficient to send a thrill of terror through the remotest corners of the land, silenced for a time the vaunt of security. It was quelled by military prowess ; the incur-sive waves were stayed, and slowly and sullenly they rolled back into the abyss, where popular discontent works darkly, far beneath the quiet surface. Thence, may they not again emerge, and reinforced by multitudes, overbear resistance, and rend the beautiful

framework of society into fragments? We know not what a day may bring forth; and surely it behoves us, when contemplating a mighty, an unremoved, unmitigated peril, to cast about for adequate means of encountering its possible advance into the very sanctuary of our domestic circles.

We are not alarmists: certainly not of that class who have, from time to time, loudly proclaimed their conviction, that the country was ruined—their despair of discovering any remedy, save in the accession of their own party to political power. That accession once accomplished, their fears instantaneously vanish, and the cry of overhanging destruction is caught up by their displaced opponents. Evil, the prolific root of peril, has always existed: it always must exist while the Spirit of darkness works in the children of disobedience; and where he finds so vast a multitude to work in, peril also will abound: but of this we do not now take hold, having something more defined, more tangible to grapple with: something that increases upon us with a steady growth, not to be even temporarily checked by any such change of policy as has been

found to follow on changes of men, or modification of measures : an evil that cannot be remedied by the multiplication of legislative enactments, unless a simultaneous effort on the part of all in any wise concerned with the administration of affairs among their fellow-men, concur in meeting it : and this class of co-operators embraces alike the highest responsible adviser of the crown, and the humblest overlooker in the lowest department of manual labour ; alike the primate of all England, and the obscure assistant of a village-school ;—alike the illustrious lady, who, on earth, owns no superior, and the journey-woman sempstress, who doles out to each pale-faced apprentice her allotted portion of needle-work, in a milliner's back parlour.

For all these exercise authority, and against authority, in every form, is the spirit rampant that menaces our overthrow. Not wilful turbulence alone, impatient of wholesome restraint, but the very nature of man, in some of its most blameless developements, is struggling around us. We glance over the long lines of building, rising, as if by magic, on every side : but follow not to their homes the

artizans who reared those walls. We whirl along the railroad : but inquire not concerning the men whose nervous sinews excavated the hill, heaped up the embankment, wrought out the iron terrace, or brought from the bowels of the earth the fuel that feeds that locomotive furnace. We approve the texture of the thousand variegated draperies that adorn our countrywomen ; but ask not how fares it with the hundreds of thousands who spun those delicate threads, arranged them on the loom, and applied the many-tinted pattern. We behold a field, rich with waves of corn, ripening to the sickle, or spreading its fragrant ridges of hay to the sunbeam ; and we perhaps revolve some patriotic strain, some poetic reverie of how those teeming harvests

Breathe their still song into the reaper's heart,
As home he goes beneath the joyous moon :

but we rarely tax our fancy to picture the reaper himself, with a half-clad wife, and squalid hungry children, watching his movements as he tells forth on the cottage table the sum of his weekly earnings, the gloom on his brow bespeaking a mental calculation of

their united insufficiency for warding absolute famine and nakedness a little longer from the door !

Prosperity smiles upon the few ; but they are the many, on whom its beams never fall ; and on whom the former class depend not only for the supply of all that is held to constitute prosperity, but for an exemption from what the active hostility of those hardy millions may ere long inflict on them. The varying grades of society are ordered by Him who has told us, that the poor shall never cease out of the land ; and no less the stability than the beauty of a commonwealth is involved in a due adjustment of those gradations : if it be true that the ignorant populace are necessarily incompetent to guide the state, and to legislate for an empire, no less certain is it that the educated gentlemen of England would make but sorry hands at tilling the soil, working the mines, manning the ships, and filling the looms, while yet, without a competent supply of efficient operations in those departments, the vaunted resources of the land must quickly become a dream. A diseased joint, even in one of the least and lowest limbs, neglected

because despised, may ripen to a gangrene that shall suddenly prostrate the whole frame ; and not one whit less dependent on the well-being of its humbler members, is the body politic than the body natural.

CHAPTER II.


POWER AND WEAKNESS.

Two facts, scarcely reconcilable the one with the other, yet unquestionably co-existent at this time, force themselves on our notice.


I. England is the most wealthy and powerful empire that the world ever saw.

II. There is, nevertheless, in England, such a dreadful amount of misery and oppression, as to render the very maintenance of social order within its boundaries, a matter of doubt and difficulty.

The first point will, we suppose, be generally conceded: friend and foe alike admit it. Though in itself one of the least among the nations, we find the empire of England dotting, dappling, and interlacing the whole habitable globe. She has planted herself amid the



fastnesses of North America, to an extent compared with which her native territory is utterly insignificant, and carries out a lengthened belt of valuable possessions even to the waters of the Pacific Ocean : thence sweeping northward, she terminates not her course until a rampart of everlasting ice forbids its further progress. To the south of that vast continent, she sits on many island thrones, here and there grasping possessions on the main land. In the eastern hemisphere she holds her way, manning the rocky fortress of Gibraltar, and securing a post among the islands of the Mediterranean. Touching on the western coast of Africa, she plants the standard of freedom, builds a refuge for the liberated slave, and proceeds to assert an increasing sovereignty at the Cape of Storms. She then wrests from the native princes of Hindostan nearly the half of their gorgeous possessions, and ends by establishing her authority almost at the southernmost point of the known hemisphere. It is wonderful to glance over the world's map, and after tracing these outgoings of power and enterprise, through every clime, to revert to the mere speck whence it



all originates ; the diminutive head to which these giant limbs are placed in subjection, obeying its dictates, and ministering to its requirements. To calculate the amount of wealth expended, of wakeful energy imperiously demanded for the maintenance of such supremacy in the remotest corners of the globe ; above all, the weight of responsibility incurred by a nation professing to square its doings by the standard of God's word, and therefore pledged to administer justice, and to promote piety, peace, and good-will among so many millions of human beings ; is calculated to strike the mind with awe. Assuredly no country upon earth ever occupied such ground. None ever prospered to such an extent in governing a far more limited territory, though under the advantages of that consolidation, that support derived by each part from the whole, which results from a compact form, placing the entire substance as it were beneath the eye, and within the grasp of its rulers.

Yet, wealthy as she is, and powerful and prosperous as she is, England's position is one of imminent peril. The sin of oppres-

sion, receiving daily aggravation from the heartlessness which looks with unmoved eye upon the sufferings it produces, cries aloud for judgment ; and tokens are not wanting, that the cry has entered into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth. A tremor is felt, even where it is not acknowledged ; and admitted where its cause is but imperfectly understood. Men have some general impression that all is not right ; that reforms never yet approached by the legislature, and others glanced at only to be rejected as impracticable, are called for in a voice whose entreaty is mingled with ominous warning. They would gladly see something done to increase the stability of the times ; but from never having had their attention called to a plain statement of facts, they grope their way in darkness and doubt, ending with a consolatory hope, that as they do not clearly distinguish any object of terror, the danger has been exaggerated, and will quickly pass away. Or if not, that it is of too intangible, too irresistible a character to be repelled. They regard the signs around them as indications of a gathering storm : the clouds wear a threatening aspect : but a favourable wind


may rise, and scatter them, ere yet they are ripe for the outburst; if not, what avails man's puny might to grapple with the power of elemental fury? He can but submit, and wait the issue.

Now we purpose laying before these, and all other classes of thinking men, a few leading particulars of what is, as an index of what must be, unless remedial measures be very promptly resorted to. We have brought against the land of freedom and of faith the great charge of oppressive cruelty, carried to such an excess, as to arm against us the hand of man and of God; so that alike from human and divine justice, we must look for a terrible retribution. If we can prove this allegation, nothing will remain but to inquire, how shall such wickedness be put away from us, and its natural consequences averted? We therefore proceed to the proof.

God has not seen fit to place every man on an equality with his brother. Some are rich in this world's goods, having store laid up, either by their predecessors or themselves, to furnish a supply, not only for their natural, but also for their artificial wants; and to in-

dulge their most wanton appetites for luxury and display. Others, again, not only must eat their bread by the sweat of their face, in labour and in sorrow, but they often have not opportunity afforded them of earning the morsel that is needful to sustain life ; often they are disabled by bodily infirmity or disease, from availing themselves of the possession where attainable ; and these are the poor, concerning whom it was said, even under the glorious Theocracy that governed the chosen nation of Israel, " The poor shall never cease out of the land : " and this dispensation, mysterious to our finite reason, was confirmed by the lip of the incarnate LORD. " The poor ye have always with you ; and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good." Between these two extremes, the profusely rich, and the abjectly impoverished, many gradations exist ; but go where we will, we shall find competence expanding on the one hand to overgrown wealth, and shrinking on the other into helpless pauperism.

Wealth is power. The rich man can so employ his capital, as to diffuse comfort and prosperity to the limits of a sphere regulated by the amount of his possessions ; or he



can so employ it, as to multiply guilt to himself and doubly to aggravate the sufferings of his fellow-creatures : he cannot indeed in this country purchase the brother of his nature, and, using him as a beast of burden, wring from him the daily labour of his sinews, and make a clear profit of all his service over and above the price paid for him, and the food he eats : but he can serve himself of his poor neighbour as a hireling, oppressing him in his wages, and grasping all but the wretched pittance that the law compels him to allow, and which is, in fact, the purchase-money of the toil-worn sufferer's life-blood. By withholding from him all other aid, he can compel him to work on his own terms, or to perish for lack of necessary sustenance ; and thus he wields, in his wealth, an engine of oppression quite as effectual as the sceptre of the most despotic eastern monarch.

Poverty, on the other hand, is weakness. The man who has not bread to satisfy his own hunger, or that of his children, and who is restrained by law or by principle from robbing his wealthy brother, must submit to whatsoever hard terms this latter may choose to

impose on him. He has a choice, indeed ; but it is a choice between oppression and starvation. He may not, if he could, stretch forth his hand to grasp of the superfluity of the other, so much as would purchase a crust of bread ; nor may he appropriate to appease the cravings of intolerable hunger, what the rich man has assigned to feed his dogs. Nothing then remains for him, but to crave the liberty of making merchandise of such bodily strength, or skill, as he may possess ; and it is not his to dictate terms : the labourer who has a little, may, on the strength of that little, refuse to work for less than a fair remuneration ; but he who has nothing, must procure, at any price of personal suffering, the morsel without which he cannot survive until the morrow.

Before proceeding to classify this dependent order of men, let us just ask whether, if revelation were even wholly silent on the subject, there is not in man's bosom a secret attestation, that to oppress and grind the faces of these helpless poor, is a crime calling for retribution ?

In England, the population compelled to

labour for daily bread, may be arranged, generally, under the following heads ; manufacturing, mining, commercial, and agricultural. In all these departments, many hands must necessarily be employed ; and were labourers scarce, labour would be at a high premium. The over-supply of hands, however, the—‘surplus population’ of which we hear so much,—puts it in the employer’s power to offer such miserable remuneration for time and toil, as only they who are ready to perish will avail themselves of ; and they must do so or starve. Hence the enormous increase of pauperism ; an ever-growing accession to the ranks of abject misery : from this root, rampant selfishness, spring all the evils under which the suffering classes groan ; while to apply an adequate remedy, or even to devise one, without reversing the present order of things, passes the wit of man. The fact is too obvious to be insisted on : it needs but to be plainly stated. Five hundred men, we will say, are dependent on employment, in a quarter where just as much as would afford each of them a fair day’s work is to be had. But the master of the establishment expects every man

to toil so long and so closely for the wages he is to receive, that one fifth more than what is just, is required of him,—therefore four hundred men can do the work ; and the additional hundred become ‘surplus,’ and are thrown, with perhaps some four hundred women and children dependent on them, into pauperism. Thus two portions of the general body are wronged by one act ; those who must labour, for a scanty support, beyond what nature can well sustain ; and those who are by this over-exaction of their comrades’ toil, rendered supernumerary, and left without even the privilege of earning bread.

The nature, extent, and consequences of this system, operating as it does on the different classes of working-men whom we have enumerated, shall now be laid before the reader, collected from sources alike unexceptionable, and established beyond the reach of contradiction. If it produce no other effect, it must at least silence some confident boasting on the subject of England’s righteousness as a nation : it must show how fearfully rotten is the foundation on which too many build their prognostics of increased prosperity ;

and it will help to vindicate the justice of God, if, wearied by our aggravated provocations, he should at length deal with us after our sins, and reward us after our iniquities, by applying the scourge that our own hands are twisting, for the purposes of severe chastisement.

CHAPTER III.

MANUFACTURING POOR.

ANY detailed statements of the oppressive grievances under which our poorer brethren groan in this department only, would occupy more space than we purpose assigning to the entire sketch of existing hardships. A very brief summary will be given of what has been principally verified on oath before the House of Commons, and which remains to this day unmitigated.

I. The employment, in nearly all its branches, is unhealthy, wearisome, and irksome : the confinement severe, and the numbers crowded into a given space, such as to impregnate both the physical and moral atmosphere with poisonous qualities. This is, in a measure, unavoidable ; “in the sweat of

his face " man is doomed to eat bread ; and we cannot expect that the sphere of industry in towns should be other than it is in the quality of its disadvantages ; but in the amount of suffering and of sin, accumulated upon the hapless labourers, how fearfully they are aggravated by man's refusal to be his brother's keeper, we shall presently see.

II. The number of hours out of each diurnal revolution during which the labourer is compulsorily confined in this polluted atmosphere, and tied to this exhausting routine of toil, enormously exceeds what the human constitution in its prime of strength, can sustain without serious injury. Twelve hours in the twenty-four is the minimum for children of tender years, in the mills and factories which constitute a main department of this branch, and no precise limit is set to the toil of adults ; night-work is usually provided for such as through extreme necessity are willing to earn a trifling addition to the day's pay, by robbing their wretched limbs of their nightly repose ; and suicide in this shape is unchecked, yea, encouraged, while the hand that to the same end grasped a knife, or knotted a rope,

would be struck down and confined. No space is allowed for the refreshment of a walk, or to stretch the limbs in that seasonable relaxation which, even under the lightest voluntary labour that the rich occasionally amuse themselves with, is found so grateful: such luxuries connected with the idea of a factory-labourer's business would appear little less monstrous, than their partial withdrawal from the daily enjoyment of the upper classes. The master who hires that labourer, includes in the bargain the full right to appropriate and dispose of, every faculty of his bodily being, every inspiration of his vital breath, during the long day for which he has agreed to remunerate his toil. His, do we say! *her* toil, *its* toil; for women and children form the larger portion of those who are so employed; and neither the delicacy of the woman, nor the fragility of the child, may establish a plea for exemption, or demand an extra half hour's rest. Long before daylight dawns, during the greater part of the year, and long after it has withdrawn its last gleam, the continuous task claims its victim, wholly, unreservedly! God looks down from heaven upon the chil-

dren of men, whose frame he well knows, and whom he never willingly afflicts or grieves ; each one of whom he sent into the world naked and helpless, and each one of whom in nakedness and helplessness must stand before him at the great day ; and what a spectacle does he behold ! Not among savage and barbarous nations, who never heard of the great Creator and his laws, of the blessed Redeemer and his love ; not among a people kept in comparative ignorance of both, by the substitution of the commandments of men for the doctrines of revelation,—but in a country where the knowledge of his will in all things is attainable by every human being who enquires concerning it, does this system exist. Here, in England, the Queen of nations,

The dread and envy of them all,

here, where the Bible is every man's book, and freedom is every man's birthright, do we find for the partial aggrandisement of a very few, for their indulgence in luxurious living, and the rivalry of display, multitudes chained by the strong fetter of extreme poverty, to a thralldom that leaves them absolutely unable

to acquaint themselves with what is no less essential to the pauper than to the peer ; what the latter may indeed neglect, and at his own peril choke with the riches and pleasures of this life, but which no man may withhold from another without braving the extremest wrath of God. What distinction can be drawn between the forcible wresting away of a poor man's Bible, and the exhaustion of his bodily powers to such a degree, that the very little time allowed him for rest scarcely suffices to recruit them, and leaves him neither leisure nor ability for intellectual or spiritual improvement? All must have experienced the enfeebling effect produced by physical over-exertion on the mental faculties ; and when that exertion is merely mechanical,—the recurrence of one monotonous, dull routine of almost stationary labour within the four walls of a building, in a stagnant atmosphere of heat, dust, and suffocating smells—the grievance of cruelly-protracted hours becomes more weighty than we are accustomed to consider it, while looking at the bare fact of lengthened toil : it includes the prostration of the mind with that of the body ; it not only poisons the health,

but slays the soul. Employers are habituated to talk of men as of machines, and political economists readily adopt their language; while balancing their nice calculations, they generally omit one item in the account—the poor man's soul: discussing the question of surplus population, they rarely touch upon the momentous point, of whether the tens of thousands, yea millions, upon whose fate they are deciding, shall people heaven or hell. Not that a more equitable portioning out of time would in itself lead to the right appropriation of any fraction of that time on the part of the gainer—experience too plainly shows the contrary; but to place a barrier between our fellow man and his highest duties, is an offence in no wise palliated by the probability, that if we did not block up the way, he would still neglect to use his freedom of approach. We note this down as one of the crying sins of the nation; and that it is the groundwork of one of its worst perils, no thinking man who is not an infidel (and what is infidelity but an aggravated species of wilful idiotcy?) can deny.

III. Vice and demoralization reign un-

checked in these establishments. No rule is abolished by a few exceptions : we concede that such exist, but we fearlessly challenge inspection of the mills and factories throughout the land on this point. There *are* masters who take an interest in the well-being of their servants ; who promote virtue and discountenance vice ; who adopt a system of watchful surveillance, either in their own persons or by agents preferred for their moral and spiritual qualifications ; who repress obscene language, spread a shield over female modesty, and silence the voice of blasphemous guilt. Masters, who desire not only to exclude what is evil, but to inculcate what is good ; and who, because in their estimation the increase of worldly wealth weighs as a feather against “ the wrath that is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man,” would not for cent per cent profit on every shilling they lay out, meet the woe denounced on such as make haste to be rich at the expense of the poor, in temporal things, much less in eternal. Of these we can but say, “ Their work is with the Lord, and their reward with their God : ” but what proportion

do they bear to the bulk of their brethren ? Is it as one to twenty ? one to fifty ? one to a hundred ? We fear it is not.

This, then, is the all-but-universal character of a factory :—the labourers consist of persons of both sexes and of all ages, from the hoary transgressor, whose experience in the craft compensates in the employer's sight for the diminution of his bodily strength, and whose long experience in iniquity renders him no less effectual in Satan's service,—down to the little child that cannot yet attach a meaning to the foul expressions which its ears drink in. These persons, contributing each some share to the common stock of evil communication, with feelings narrowed by perpetual imprisonment ; soured by contrasting their own wretched lot with that of the classes for whom they toil ; clouded by exclusion from all with which God has beautified the face of nature, and gifted with power at once to refresh, expand, soften and brighten man's mind ; irritated by the compulsory proximity of some who are feared, hated, envied or despised, where evil passions, like fire, will rage more fiercely in proportion as they are


pent in by a narrow boundary ; and hardened by habitual striving against the dictates of natural conscience, and the little, the very little they know of God's holy law,—these people form the element in which they live : an ocean of reckless, raging profligacy, prepared to overpower and engulph every new victim cast upon the surface of its bottomless abyss. Among them marriages are formed, despite the universal licentiousness that seems to set the sacred tie at defiance ; and the young wife enters upon her domestic duties wholly unacquainted with, and unfitted for, their performance. Her morals *may* have escaped the practical pollution of the mass, her mind cannot have continued undefiled in the daily hearing and seeing of such abominations ; and she becomes, if the injuries sustained by the crippling nature of her employment have not incapacitated her from child-bearing, the mother of infants whom she knows not to train otherwise than upon factory principles ; who are probably doomed, as soon as their little limbs shall have gained sufficient strength for the lightest description of labour, to be driven to the same shambles,

and sacrificed to the same golden idol as their parents were. The man, meanwhile, finding no household fireside rendered pleasant in its poverty by female neatness and good management, cheerfulness and love, betakes himself to the gin-shop, or the chartist meeting, to be wrought up by fiery potations and fiery harangues, to the pitch necessary for whatsoever evil work lies before him ; whether it be in the dens of grovelling sensuality, or in scenes where the murderer whets his weapon, and the incendiary trims his torch. To what better issue can daily attendance in a school of unrepressed vice be expected to tend ? If all arrive not at this point, to the restraining mercy of a long-suffering God be the praise !

IV. It involves, indirectly, but inevitably, a fearful amount of infanticide. We do not here allude to the shortening of youthful life by the premature labour and unnatural restraint of boys and girls, but to the mortality of infants, in towns where large manufacturing populations are located. More than half of those so born die under the age of five years. The poor babes must necessarily inherit many ills through the weakened con-

stitutions of their parents, injured by unremitting toil, if not by criminal excesses ; and just when the mother's continued care is most essential to the little one's progress, that mother is absent earning the scanty subsistence on which her family depends. The child is left to strangers ; or to other children, a little older than itself. Its infantile wants are not understood, or not regarded ; its cries of helpless distress are more frequently punished by impatient severity than soothed by the tenderness that a baby's sorrows naturally call forth : its hunger is unappeased, its thirst unassuaged, its chilled limbs uncherished by warmth, and it dies. Ay, but it lives elsewhere. Jesus said, " Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones ; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven." The neglected babe, whose little shell is covered with a spade-full of earth, and its short existence forgotten, lives ; myriads,—aye millions of them live to bear a fearful witness against the cruel system that consigned them to the grave.

Added to all this, there is a new and dreadful feature of the manufacturing system,



which of itself is sufficient to justify the deepest alarm. We allude to the substitution now rapidly and extensively taking place, in many great branches of factory-labour,—of *female* workers in lieu of males.

A letter received last summer from a large town in Yorkshire, said, ‘Three years ago, at the opening of the morning, you might have seen flocking into our town, from the hamlets adjacent, more than seven hundred men, who were regularly employed in the factories of the place. You would now see them no longer; but in their room you would see seven hundred *women*, leaving the husbands unemployed, and their infants without female care, and all thronging in to do that very work which formerly gave occupation and a maintenance to their husbands. I need not explain, that the wages they receive are far lower, the condition of their families far more miserable, and that the saving thus effected by their employers, is the sole cause of this deplorable change.’


From Birmingham, one of the most energetic and well-informed of the clergy writes to the same effect. Even in the heavy and

laborious metallic works of that place, female labour is rapidly superseding that of the men. The cause is quite obvious. A woman may be offered ten or twelve shillings a week, when a male artisan would expect twenty or twenty-four. Hence vast numbers of the men have, within the last two or three years, been dismissed, and their wives taken on, to do *the same work* at lower wages. The operation of the change is deplorable. The man remains bound to the spot, because it is *there* that his wife is earning a poor subsistence for himself and the children. Yet he,—there being hundreds in the same circumstances, find it quite impossible to get *any* employment. He lounges about the streets, or at the door of the beer-shop, or tries in vain to supply a mother's place to the miserable and crying children ; till exhausted in the vain attempt, he is driven forth into the streets, a fit instrument for Chartist or Socialist agitators. Meanwhile the woman becomes brutalized by her toil, and by workshop-society, and cares only, when she returns home at night, for the recruiting her exhausted strength and spirits by such means as her poor earnings will afford.

CHAPTER IV.

MINING POOR.

THE horrors of this department have, like their sable treasures, been long hidden from the light of day. Now, drawn from the depths, they have kindled a twofold fire ; on the one part of vehement indignation, on the other of angry resentment ; aloof from both of which stands a third party, who, having no immediate interest at stake, or being imperfectly informed on the subject, are neither shocked at the disclosures, nor angry with those who have made them. By recent legislative enactment, some of the worst features of the system will be removed within a short time ; but, looking at things as they have been for a long series of years, and as at this day they still are, we cannot speak




prospectively. The intended removal of females from this sphere of labour is a matter of great thankfulness; and we shall best excite that thankful feeling, by giving a true, though brief and feeble sketch of what is, at this time, still in full operation underground, and against the possible continuance of which it behoves the country most vigilantly to guard. It is no new page in our history that we are about to consider, though newly opened to the public eye; and truly it is a page that needs all the authentication we can give it, to vindicate it from the character of a horrible and a libellous romance.

I. The position of a miner is inevitably one of unnatural gloom, discomfort, and imminent peril. The interior of a coal-mine, as described by those who, without any other object in view than the gratification of natural or scientific curiosity have explored one, is a region of darkness and fear, sufficient to daunt the boldest spirit, and to sadden the most mirthful. The usual descent is by a perpendicular shaft, varying of course in depth, but from the bottom of which the wide mouth, with daylight above it, is described as resem-


bling in size the palm of a man's hand. The manner of descending shall, by-and-by, be noticed; at present, we speak only of the place itself. At certain depths, passages, or galleries, branch off, intersecting each other like streets in a city, but often exceedingly low-roofed, hewn out in the solid bed, of which immense masses are here and there left, like huge misshapen pillars, to support the roof which would otherwise be liable to break in and ruin the whole work. Connected with these main and permanent thoroughfares are others, excavations from whence the coal is taken, for conveyance to the surface; and these vary in size according to the thickness of the seam; but if they be very narrow and low, it is evident that the acts of detaching and of carrying the coal, must be performed in positions painfully cramping and unnatural. Some of these seams are ten yards in thickness: others ten inches; and in many of the mines now working, the roads do not exceed eighteen inches in height.

The closeness of the place would speedily produce suffocation, were it not ventilated from above: this can only be done effectually

ally by the sinking of two shafts, a large fire being kept burning at the foot of one, and the air which descends the other being by this means constantly borne upwards, after traversing the various passages—through which it is forced, by means of a suitable arrangement of doors and partitions—a supply of fresh atmospheric air is ensured; dependent of course on the pains bestowed in constructing, and the care taken in working the necessary apparatus. The heat of these subterranean workshops varies so considerably, that the difference of temperature, in the main road and in the workings, often ranges to twenty degrees; the latter being of course the highest. If the ventilation be imperfect, the heat in the workings becomes most offensive; and the character of the gases combined, the moisture where the drainage is not very complete, and animal effluvia, render it the most noisome, —most horrible atmosphere that man's lungs can inhale. The drainage of a coal-mine is, indeed, only secondary in immediate importance to its ventilation; and when it is considered that not only the ground beneath the feet, but the roof overhead, frequently




assumes the character of a wet sponge, and that the almost naked bodies toiling therein are constantly bathed in the perspiration which severe muscular exertion and a close-pent passage of heated air combine to produce, we may form some estimate of the sufferings undergone from these continual risings and drippings of a damp the most chill and sepulchral that can be conceived. Even the horses are sometimes covered with waxed cloths, to protect them from the descending streams, while the water, thickened with coal-dust, rises so high, that except the labourers employed, all who pass are obliged to use a carriage, drawn through this compound to the depth of a man's knee. Such, in very brief outline, is the scene of a miner's labour; with the addition of all being wrapped in primeval darkness, save as the glimmer of candles, and the still more contracted gleam of the lantern, serve to make that darkness visible: no ray of natural light, no breath of unfettered air, no sound from among the many that gladden man's heart, as he mingles in daylight haunts of his fellow man, or crosses the sunshiny meadow, ever visit the



miner's place of work ; but perils fearful to contemplate impend over him, requiring above almost any other predicament of human life, that his way amid the bowels of the earth should be cleared of all unavoidable enticements to transgression, and the solemn truth allowed to bear with full force upon his conscience, that " there is but a step between him and death." The more common dangers to which they all are generally exposed are, precipitation down the shaft, to a depth, perhaps, of some hundred feet, by the breaking of a rope, or other damage to machinery employed in the descent and ascent, or from a false step, giddiness, or overbalancing ; being drawn over the pulley, through carelessness in the hand employed to turn it, and so flung back into the shaft ; crushing, by the fall of stones, or other heavy material down the shafts or in the mines ; drowning in the pits of water ; explosions of gas or of gunpowder, from which no degree of precaution can always guard the miner ; suffocation by choke-damp, always apt to accumulate ; and being run down by the team-waggons in their rapid descent, with a load of coal sufficient to

grind the human frame to a jelly. Of these it would naturally be supposed the latter class of perils, the explosions, damp, and crushings, were more generally destructive ; but the returns show that a greater extent of mortality results from the unguarded state of the pit's mouth, and utter recklessness of those who superintend the pulleys, and from the neglect of drainage below, than from any other cause. So little do the lives of our fellow-creatures sometimes weigh in the balance against the procurement of some extra indulgence brought within reach by the augmented produce of their toil, that few are found to expend in fencing the mouth of a coal-pit, or paying an adult for attending to the apparatus usually committed to a young child, the sum available for modernizing after the newest pattern, the furniture of a boudoir ; or to care for the perfect drainage of a damp mine, in preference to the immediate beautifying of a domain, the purchase of its sable wealth. How far this neglect operates, we shall see under another head. Hitherto we have spoken principally of coal-mines : there are others, namely, iron-stone, tin, copper, lead, and zinc. The




iron-stone mines nearly resemble the coal, being worked in a very similar manner ; with this difference, that the beds are rarely more than three feet in thickness, consequently the space for the movements of the workers is more painfully confined ; and neither horses nor asses can assist in bringing the iron-stone to the foot of the shaft. Its great weight renders the carriage exceedingly laborious ; and these mines being usually much more wet and cold than the coal-mines, neither can they be so effectually ventilated. The other mines are worked in a dissimilar manner, their productions being principally embedded in solid rock ; and the veins of metal not lying in horizontal beds, their course must be followed by boring, and by continual blasting with gunpowder. It is also obvious, that due ventilation cannot be supplied through such shafts and galleries as compose these works ; in fact, after the first blasting in the morning, they are generally filled with smoke for the day, so dense, that sometimes the miner can scarcely see his hand. Steam-engines, and various kinds of machinery, are requisite for removing the broken rocks, and raising the continual

gushes of water to the surface. There are instances, as in Alston Moor, where the labourer's place of work is at the end of a passage *five miles* in length from the level by which he entered ; no atmospheric air reaching him, but such as slowly winds its way, unassisted by any current, to that distance. In such instances, the expense of sinking an extra shaft, or otherwise forming a current, is often considered more than the mine is worth : the proprietor would rather abandon it ; but men and boys are found so pressed by hunger, as to subject themselves to every extremity of suffering inseparable from such fearful exclusion of the vital element, to earn a morsel of food. Falls and explosions are the principal causes of injury in these mines : the descent and ascent are generally by ladders ; a very toilsome exertion where the depth is great. Having thus briefly noticed the points of variation between different descriptions of mines, we will return to those, by far the most numerous and extensive, with which we set out, and open a scene to the eye of man, from which the eye of God is never withdrawn : though into all the abominations that are naked and


open to Him, we cannot enter. The work would be liable to a prosecution from the Society for discountenancing vice, that should only touch upon certain features of those pandemoniums, to which some of the noblest and wealthiest of the land have long consigned the wives and daughters of their brethren, for the sake of the few paltry trinkets which may for a season sparkle on their own.

II. The nature of the ordinary employment in coal-mines, is to the stout heart of man appalling, to his vigorous intellect debilitating, to his sinewy frame in its full maturity exhausting. But of man we will not now speak, except to individualize one, the head of a family, which he is bound to provide with the necessities of life : we will fix our gaze on the only means left within his reach for so providing them, in a mining district ; where what he, by the utmost efforts of willing labour, can earn, is often utterly insufficient : whence it follows that ere his wife and babes can eat, they must be immersed in the untold horrors of those subterranean hells : ere they can be so clad as to meet either the breeze of heaven, or the daylight-gaze, they must labour naked in those abodes




of darkness and of the shadow of death. Or, yet worse than from necessity, men whose natural selfishness has been fostered in this school of hardening profligacy, and their blunted feelings brought to crave the perpetual excitement of strong drink and other gross indulgencies, avail themselves of the inducements held out to barter there the health, the morals, the lives, the souls of their wretched partners and offspring, that they may themselves revel above ground on the wages of their cruel sufferings below. Even where humane proprietors, made acquainted for the first time with the extent of these atrocities, desire to abate them, and would willingly alter the system; an obstacle exists in the interested cruelty of such men, on whom nothing short of a compulsory law will operate, to rescue their helpless dependents from the slavery of the coal-pits.

The coal having been broken off by men, who are often obliged to lie along on their backs, and in that position to knock it away, it must be collected and carried to the bottom of the shafts. To get the skips or vehicles along, various plans are adopted, where the



narrowness of the seam, or road, renders it impracticable to introduce any four-footed beast of burden ; and, among these, the girdle and chain prevail, the former being fastened round the loins ; the latter, attached to it, passed between the legs, and hooked on the carriage, or corve, which is thus drawn along ; the woman, girl, or boy, going on all-fours, in a position of which it is hard to say, whether the pain or the degradation is the greater. A loaded corve, perhaps above eight hundred weight, is usually drawn on an average from three to nine miles a day : that is to say, twenty are taken upon a line, it may be of 150, it may be of 400 yards in length, of which some portion is generally very much inclined : how terrible the exertion must be to a delicate girl, or to a woman within a day or two, within an hour or two of giving birth to a child, may be partially conceived ; but the reality can be understood only by such as suffer it. And this in darkness, in damp, in extreme cold and extreme heat alternating, under the control of men whose discontent and discomfort can vent themselves in any measure of cruelty on the poor harnessed slave, who



works at their beck. A variety is sometimes introduced in the mode of working, particularly when it is uphill: instead of dragging the corve, the guide, or hurrier, pushes it forward by great force, resting the head and hand against it; while either upon the carriage, or in the front of the hurrier's cap, a bit of candle is stuck, to light the otherwise rayless path. It is no unusual thing for a girl of fifteen or less to lift a single coal of an hundred weight from the ground to the top of a corve, three feet high, preparatory to moving on with her burden. The dress of these young labourers of both sexes is the same: from seven or eight years of age to twenty and upwards they may be seen, naked to the waist, and having a loose pair of ragged trousers, frequently worn to tatters by the constant friction of the chain. When the passage is sufficiently high to admit of it, the hurrier faces the front of the corve, and, by violent effort, pulls it along, proceeding backwards. In some mines, there are rails laid down, and long narrow waggon, placed on small wheels, convey the coal; two or three children are required to move them at the customary

speed ; one with girdle and chain drags on all-fours ; two others, with their heads and the palms of their hands pressed against the back, thrust it forward, their bodies being very nearly horizontal, the roof very low, and the velocity of the waggon rendering it necessary : for, if not bent to within a few inches of the ground, their heads would be smashed against the rugged surface above.

One of the carriages used is an oblong tub, without wheels, containing three hundred weight of coals, which is dragged by a woman on a rough ground, frequently over a considerable ascent. Where this road is very steep, they usually have a rope lying loosely on the ground, to cling to, the position being a very painful stoop, and the whole weight drawn on by means of a chain passing between the legs. A candle, stuck upon the black wall, here and there, by a bit of wet clay, throws a sickly glimmer on the drawer's path, and a young boy or girl, called a thrutter, pushes along the tub.

Coal-bearing is another branch of labour assigned to women, girls, and boys, and practised where no carriage could ascend. This

is so very peculiar an exercise, that it deserves a little closer description. A female is provided with a basket, shaped somewhat like a cockleshell, filled with coals, and which a man can sometimes scarcely lift to her back, where it is fastened by passing two straps across her forehead, while she bends her body as nearly to a semicircular form as possible. Large pieces of coal are then heaped about the top of the basket, till the weight, in the case of a stout girl, has reached a hundred, or a hundred and a half ; when she hangs her bit of candle to the cloth that crosses her head, and begins her journey. She first has to walk on level ground eighty-four feet, then to ascend a ladder eighteen feet high ; then to proceed along a road, or passage, between three feet and a half, and four feet and a half high : then another ladder, another road, and so on, till she has traversed a distance equal to the height of St. Paul's Cathedral. There she casts her load into the tub, and returns for another. This work is continued, in the case referred to, from five in the morning to five in the evening, on the four first week-days ; and from five o'clock on Friday morning to Saturday noon. The

female in question, constantly subjected to this terribly laborious and protracted exertion, has been, in some cases, JUST SIX YEARS OLD !

It frequently happens that the large pieces of coal heaped loosely upon the bearer's neck, fall off; and occasionally the band across the forehead breaks; in either case the falling weight descends upon the person next behind. Sometimes, in trying to save or recover the burden, the bearer loses her footing, and slips from the ladder into the depth below. The bearing, hurrying, and drawing, are practised by girls, young women, and the mothers of large families, up to the very hour when they find it necessary to hasten home to give birth to a child, probably dead, through the mother's previous sufferings; and within the week after, or at latest in ten or twelve days, they are again chained to their horrible slavery in these subterranean galleys.

But one more branch of the mining occupation remains to be noticed: it has been stated that the ventilation of mines is effected by judiciously arranging passages, and closing them up at proper points, to prevent a current sweeping along the narrow roads, to the ex-


clusion of branches that require an equal supply. Through these doors it is necessary that the laden carriages, corves, waggons, tubs, &c. should pass, but they must be instantly closed again. A string is therefore fixed to the door, and a helper, called a trapper, placed behind it; who, on hearing the vehicle approach, pulls the string, holds the door open while the carriage goes through, and lets it close again directly. For this work little creatures of eight, five, yea, four years are chosen, whose fathers carry them down to the pit even in their night-gowns, as the evidence has shown, place each poor babe behind a door, and leave it, crying with cold and terror, in total darkness for twelve or sixteen hours; with no one variation of its wretched employment, so long as a corve is at work in the mine. This is the practice in England, Wales, Scotland, (not in Ireland, to the eternal honour of her race be it recorded :) this, in the land of infant education, the land of light and liberty! This has been done by Christian parents, with the complaisant acquiescence of Christian gentlemen, noblemen, legislators, and in fact of the whole country,

and we challenge the universe to outdo it in point of cold-blooded barbarity. It was shown on evidence, that if the poor babe, exhausted by fretting, and pining for the rest so absolutely needful for infancy, should fall asleep in the still darkness of its frightful prison, a beating would be the consequence ; and a little experience of the weight of a man's fist soon teaches the trembling creatures to devise means for remaining awake. Sometimes they beg a small end of candle from a compassionate hurrier as he passes, and that gives them a few moments of comparative cheerfulness. Some of the older children, who may have learned their letters, will take a little book, perhaps ; but it is only when a few drops of tallow are bestowed, that it can be looked into. A little girl said to the Commissioners, ' I have to trap without a light, and I'm scared. I go at four, and sometimes half-past three in the morning, and come out at five and half-past. I never go to sleep. Sometimes I sing when I've light, but not in the dark ; I dare not sing then.' In the Cumberland collieries, the expenditure is submitted to of providing a small candle for the poor little

trapper at his monotonous post ; but this is not the case in other quarters : and it is enough to appal man's spirit, to think on the impartial eye that beholds without an intervening obstruction, the poor man's solitary child immured in ebon darkness, suffering what the hardened felon in his cell is not condemned to endure ; and the blaze of light that falls on the jewelled assembly, luxuriating in the drawing-room of that poor child's enriched employer. That such things should have been laid before the British public, certified on oath, and made known, through our public press, in every corner of the civilized globe, is a humiliating thought ; and when viewed in connexion with our high privileges of light and knowledge, and the profession of a pure faith, it becomes the more alarming ; because we cannot expect that He who ruleth over all, will permit such deeds to come before the world as though they consisted with that religion, of which the golden rule is, " Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, that do ye likewise unto them."

III. But we have now to enquire into the moral state of the mining population, neces-

sarily resulting from their mode of life; and here a scene of deepened gloom opens upon us, but faintly cheered by approaching amelioration : for the evil has existed so long and so widely in full vigour, that a generation must pass away ere the frightfully demoralizing effects of what may be discontinued, but cannot be recalled, can cease to operate. Indeed, the transfer to the surface, of a body of females so utterly hardened in the gross depravities of the mines, must, for a time, spread contamination on all sides. This is the deadly consequence of sin : it produces its own punishment, as naturally as the tree bears its own fruit. We may cease to connive at the fearful oppression that has, in this department, ground down our female poor ; but we cannot remove the sable stain from their minds, by ceasing to smear their bodies with the filth of our coal-pits ; nor remove the fetter of sin from their souls, while unloosing from their loins the degrading chain that yokes them to the corve. Individual repentance alone can stay this flood of iniquity, thus to be turned into a different channel ; and only national repentance can



avert the issue, as regards the reckless desperation of tens of thousands, steeled in habitual guilt, loving the wages of iniquity, and exasperated by the withdrawal at once of the gains acquired by the unnatural toil of their own female dependents, and the criminal gratifications constantly afforded them by the presence of their neighbours' wives and daughters in the pandemonium of licentiousness. It is easy to corrupt a people ; but to restore to the way of righteousness such as have utterly fallen from it, or to bring into the good paths those whom we have prevented from seeking them early, and led or driven into the very midst of the strongest temptations, is hard indeed !

In reference to this distressing branch of the subject, we have shown that the persons employed are of both sexes and all ages ; that a great proportion of them work almost entirely naked, the one ragged garment they wear not being available even for purposes of decency ; and that the place of their labour is of wide extent, divided into low narrow passages and cells ; all utterly dark, save where a candle at long intervals glimmers against


the black walls, or is attached to their own head-gear, or to the carriage they draw. The coal-getters, and some other classes of workers must be men ; a large proportion of the hurriers, drawers, and bearers who wait on them are females ; and these again are promiscuously mixed in their field of labour with lads and youths. No circumstances can possibly be conceived more inevitably tending to general profligacy ; and that the most abandoned vice does reign in the mines, transforming the female character into something so depraved that their language and conduct is described as being far worse than the men's, is but too well attested. No visitor can pass among them, without being shocked by the obscenity of their discourse, and the indecency of their appearance ; and even the men, whose worst passions are continually excited and gratified by their presence, are often known, in sober moments, to express a wish that females were excluded from the pits. Added to the powerful influence of constant persuasion to sin, is the total absence of all restraining principle. Commencing in infancy the miner's career, they cannot have enjoyed even a glimpse of decent

education. Many are carried down before they can speak plainly, and not a few have passed years without seeing daylight except on the sabbath. In some districts, no doubt, Sunday and Adult Schools are provided ; but even if compelled to attend them, what degree of application to the dull contents of a spelling book, can be expected from persons to whom the very light that streams through the window is a dazzling novelty, and every passing object seen under its beam a rare attraction ? The testimony of all engaged in the enquiry, goes to establish the fact, that wretchedness in every degrading form characterizes the mining population ; and a harvest must be reaped from what is already sown, before we can prepare the ground to yield a different crop.

IV. In reference to its effects on children employed in mines, those already grown up have been considered above ; the Act recently passed provides for the rescue of all girls, and of boys under ten years old. At that age the latter may be apprenticed, and for eight years ; and the fate to which the greater part of them are doomed is dreadful indeed. They are

principally taken from the most helpless and pitiable class, the orphan or deserted pauper-children, sheltered in workhouses ; who have not, upon earth, a friend to defend their cause, or to succour them when oppressed. These are bound to the men permanently employed in mines, and whatever the selfish indolence, caprice, or savage ill-temper of their owners may see fit to inflict upon them, that they must bear. Frightful outrages are common, where these defenceless boys are found unequal to the stretch of laborious exertion required of them. The usual mode of punishment is by flinging a large coal at the offender, the weight of which, and its sharp, jagged, angular edges, will inflict at one blow bruises and cuts sufficient to torture him for many a day; the latter especially, being irritated by the perpetual admission of coal-dust into the wounds. Extreme barbarity is a too frequent feature in the dispositions of those who, having outgrown alike their own turn of similar suffering, and every kindly impulse cherished beneath the light of day, and in the social circle, have only two propensities to satisfy in those dreary dens of

midnight gloom—the rage of licentiousness and the rage of tyranny. It may be expected, that the removal of what now gratifies the one, will render the other more pitiless in its exactions ; and many a gust of fury must the poor little fellows encounter. Common humanity pleads their cause within our bosoms ; but there is a voice much nearer to us all, even that of self-preservation, which demands attention to their case : for the God of heaven is bound, by His own immutable word, to show Himself the avenger of such. No being, however obscure or insignificant, is hidden from His view ; “ Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ? ” said the Lord Jesus, “ and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father.” How much more valuable than many sparrows, must be an heir of immortality, in the sight of Him who breathed into man’s nostrils the breath of life ! If there be to Him any difference between the infant cradled in down and pillowed on satin, and the babe that moans out its unheeded wants from a truss of mouldy straw, it surely arises from the tender compassion with which He, who shed his own blood for the sin of the



world, regards the inheritor alike of Adam's iniquity, and of the original doom pronounced upon the culprit—one who must eat bread in the sweat of his face, in labour also and in sorrow all the days of his life. There is a perpetual testimony against us going up from this neglected and afflicted class of sufferers: a class which might be trained to become a social and national blessing; who, having no acknowledged ties to divide their affection, would attach themselves closely to the benevolent guides and guardians of their helpless years; and, on that principle, would prove loyal, faithful subjects; instead of growing up, as now they do, the most degraded of slaves, to become the most reckless insurgents, and the fiercest of tyrants.

We have done with this department; not that the subject is exhausted, for in truth we have not fairly entered into it; but because, unhappily, a multitude of rival topics press upon us. As in the case of the manufacturing poor, it is freely admitted that there are exceptions to the account we have given; nay, that whole counties are comparatively free from some of the worst features of the system.

Still, the picture we have drawn is faithfully copied from the official reports of the government commissioners ; and the abuses we have detailed have both a real and a very extensive existence.

CHAPTER V.

COMMERCIAL POOR.

THIS branch takes a wide range. Viewed in reference to the working-classes, it embraces a variety of callings and employments, impossible to specify. The number is very large of those who live by receiving an article in its raw or unformed state, and returning it fit for the market. Some do it independently, at their own dwellings ; others assemble under the eye of their employer, and work in a body. Others, again, purchase the article, and make what profit they can by selling it at an advance, either as they received it, or with additions, the result of their own labour or ingenuity. This kind of subsistence is more uncertain and precarious than that of a hired workman ; but it also savours more of liberty

and respectability in the estimation of its pursuers, which leads almost every one with a little money at hand to embark in some commercial speculation, however humble. It is, indeed, quite the genius of the English, their earliest habits of thought leading them in that direction ; and it would be well for the country if a greater share of humane observation was fixed on these poor people, and encouragement always given to their laudable struggles to rise above want. How severe those struggles are, and how bitter the privations endured, a little examination will soon show. We will divide them under two heads :


I. Those who, at the outset, have a small capital with which to trade.

II. Those who can only calculate on the produce of to-day's industry for means to carry on business tomorrow : their whole support depending on the surplus gain, after deducting that necessary expenditure.

Petty shopkeepers, pedlars, and hucksters of all kinds, belong to the former division. Those also who deal in ready-made articles, the raw material of which is principally vended by the former. It does not often, perhaps,

occur to persons who proudly contemplate the rising column of England's commercial greatness, that the poor emaciated creature who presses on them, as she crosses their path, her pincushions and kettle-holders for sale, is a legitimate member of the order for which they entertain so just a respect. She has become possessed of a few shreds by purchase, or through the bounty perhaps of some compassionate maid-servant, and having exerted the best of her judgment and skill in fashioning them, she brings them into the market ; with a far greater stake depending on the success of her speculation, than the most princely merchant on 'change, perhaps, ever risked. This is, certainly, going low in the scale of commercial enterprize, when a few remnants of printed calico, or shreds of faded silk form the staple : but it affects the sustenance, very likely, of some half-dozen hungry children and their parents, Britons born, heirs of a liberty that none can curtail ; and among other things, too often, the liberty to starve in the midst of golden abundance, because their wares are too homely, and their persons too humble to attract attention.

But we must take a higher class to illustrate the mischievous principle now at work. A young man opens a small shop,—we will say of linen-drapery, in a neighbourhood where an establishment of the kind already exists: in former times, what would have been his plan? He must have commenced in a modest way, according to his means, and by sound goods, fair prices, and steady attention, endeavoured to establish a character that should enlarge his custom, yielding him an increasing profit, and in the end building up a business. Patience, assiduity, and integrity, he would have regarded as the elements of his future prosperity; and whatever his private wishes may be, he would indignantly disclaim any purpose of seeking to rise by a neighbour's ruin. Such times are, unhappily, at an end; a new system is in operation, and the young tradesman's first care, will be to advertize that he will undersell all others in the same line. He rests on the chance of thus drawing away the customers of some long-established and perhaps fair-dealing fellow tradesman; he expends a large proportion of his limited capital in showy embellish-



ments, to make it appear that he can afford a superfluous outlay, and to entrap such as are caught by external display. He procures goods on the same principle ; flimsy, gaudy, and perishable ; which he arranges according to the most attractive plan that he can devise, to catch the passenger's eye. He has, of course, two prices : but at the commencement he allows everything to go off below its proper value, and unless the neighbouring tradesman lowers his terms, at considerable present loss, and at great hazard as to the future, crushing in its birth this attempt at competition, it is probable he may succeed in securing a pretty large custom, and go on for a time with every prospect of realizing his expectations. But bye and bye, a new comer, attracted by his apparent success, opens a second opposition-shop, promising to undersell both the former. Then begins the strife ; the grand struggle to keep up appearances, and by a farther sacrifice of just profit, to drive away the intruder. A young man who has laid out his small capital in this way, cannot long contend against present loss, decreasing custom, and the feverish anxiety

inseparable from so exciting a conflict. He, perhaps, becomes more reckless in his dealings, and by the discovery of unequivocal frauds, is overwhelmed with disgrace; or, if really forced, against conscience and inclination, to adopt a system now become general, he droops under what he cannot remedy, and soon falls a victim. What his future lot may be, no one can predict: but the ranks of our army, the walls of our workhouses, and alas! the hulks of our convict-ships could exhibit many a living illustration of this statement, many a man who would cheerfully have entered on, and steadily pursued, the good old slow-coach method of establishing an honest business; but who has been by the altered habits and circumstances of the times, borne on the railway of artificial locomotion to the terminus of hopeless ruin.

There is, besides, another class, most extensive, and intimately connected with the foregoing, not however, employed *en masse*, or hired by the day, as in factories, mines, and farms: they form the operative section of the commercial world, generally working at their homes, and paid, not according to the number

of hours, but the amount of work done by them. Of course, their employment is very uncertain ; and the same pernicious system of competition by underselling each other's labour makes havoc among them. We will instance a few trades, with some particulars that will point out the evils under which they suffer.

To begin with stationary : envelopes, now a necessary luxury, are usually made by poor girls, in their own homes, whose regular payment was, and still *should be*, two-pence per hundred ; and a miserable subsistence could they earn out of that, though still it is something towards paying for a morsel to eat, and a corner to sleep in. We now find envelopes advertised by some establishments at the west-end of the town at *sixpence per thousand* ! According to the regular rate of payment, a thousand envelopes would cost above thrice that sum for the making only, exclusive of the paper ; and we ask, to what must the wretched wages of these poor girls be reduced in order to afford them at sixpence the thousand, materials included ? Has some newly-invented machinery superseded the movements of their willing fingers, and thrown the for-

lorn young creatures upon the town? or has a reduction, the amount of which we should be ashamed to calculate, enabled the epistolary world to save a farthing on every dozen billets they dispatch, at the trifling cost of driving to starvation, prostitution, or some summary mode of self-destruction, the succourless young females whose bread is thus wrested away?

Again: bookbinding supports, or supported, a large number of very respectable people: a clever artisan was able to earn, when in full work, about forty shillings a week, in London. High wages indeed, compared with some others; but to keep a wife and children in comfort in the metropolis, two pounds per week is not a very large income. However, 'Cheap Bibles' are become fashionable; and the principal binders have recently offered to pay their men *six shillings* for the labour of binding *one hundred pocket Bibles*. A man, skilful in the business, by working early and late, can manage to bind three hundred in a week; and thus to earn eighteen shillings in lieu of forty. It is with sorrow of heart that we link the name of that sacred book with instances of oppression like this; but such is

the fact, and with facts, as we find them, we profess to deal. The payment tendered to the bookbinder, and which of course he may refuse, if he prefer total destitution, is just equivalent to the wages of a bricklayer's labourer; and the elaborate decorations which some look on with complacency, supposing they have augmented the gains of an honest artisan, feed, not the poor workman's hungry children, but the hot strife of covetous competition among rival dealers in literary ware. The manner in which this reduction is effected, is thus described by the men themselves, in reference to a party by whom it was practised: ' They entered into a calculation of the price of materials, and of the wages of the labour employed thereon, apportioning so much for materials and profit, and so much for wages: and after ascertaining the wages paid to journeymen bookbinders in their trade, considered that these journeymen were paid too much for their labour, and that, therefore, the low price at which they required the work to be done might be easily made to pay the employer, by a corresponding reduction in the wages of the men, and also of the women in their employ-

ment. A reduction, however, amounting to nearly one-half the wages formerly paid, was therefore made by the employers, to whom remonstrance was useless, it being soon found that the price they received would admit of no higher wages.'

The folding and stitching part of the work is usually done by poor females; and while the workmen are curtailed of one half of their wages, these, of course, are reduced to a mere nothing. Decent clothing is beyond their reach; the want of which alone, is often the occasion of throwing virtuous, and heretofore respectable young girls upon the streets.

These specimens would suffice to render intelligible the subject-matter of our heavy complaint; but another instance we cannot forbear mentioning: fifty years ago, it would have been treated as an enormous fiction, passing the bounds of credibility, whether as regarded the amount of work done, or the scale of remuneration adopted and submitted to.

The two daughters of a Major in the army were thrown upon their own unaided exertions

for support ; and though doing the utmost they could, in the only line of business affording them employment, their destitution was so extreme, that one of them, to preserve her sick sister from starving, was compelled to make it known. Yet these ladies were in full employ, at the usual price paid for the species of needlework placed in their hands. They were shirt-makers, and for every shirt furnished to the tradesman, they received THREE HALFPENCE ! By working incessantly for ten hours at the utmost stretch of speed, and under every advantage, the lady could earn fourpence halfpenny ; out of which she had to provide herself with needles, thread, and the candlelight necessary for her employment ; to feed and clothe herself, and to pay rent. Happily for them, and for thousands besides, they *were* ladies—educated, accomplished ladies, the sole survivors of a deserving officer ; and through the magistrate, the police and the press, public sympathy was largely excited on their behalf : some gentlemen also undertook to investigate the condition of the miserable sempstresses of no pretension to gentility, with no recognized claims on public

feeling, no hope of private justice or humanity, and heard a simple statement from a number of them, who gladly attended the summons, to state their case ; and who said that if, in consideration of their having to purchase needles and thread, the trade would raise their remuneration to TWOPENCE, it would be a very great boon. This is a case that defies comment ; it tells the tale of grinding oppression, and female labour doing its very utmost to earn honestly a crust of bread, more touchingly than any advocate could do it. When we consider that while the three halfpence (deducting the value of materials,) is being earned, an infant, perhaps, hangs at the breast, and others surround the knee of the sempstress, watching her progress towards the attainment of the penny roll that is to be shared among them, we shall be better able to judge of the perils that impend over the nation, while He looks on, to Whom all things are known, from Whom all good things do come, and Who has attached a solemn responsibility to the possession of superfluities.

Of these commercial poor the number is very large ; and their condition, generally

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Of these commercial poor the number is very large ; and their condition, generally

speaking, is more dependent on the private character of the master-tradesman, than on fluctuations in national prosperity. They furnish goods for home consumption, the export-trade being in other hands, and principally carried on by means of large establishments of hired operatives employed on the premises in union with machinery. The little that we have said, may suffice to give an insight into their situation, compelled to take whatever an employer may be disposed to give, or silently and unobserved to drop the unproductive employment, and die.

CHAPTER VI.

AGRICULTURAL POOR.

It appears extraordinary, that in a country like England, the agriculturist should stand in the position which at present he certainly seems to occupy,—“ his hand against every man, and every man’s hand against him.” Scripture, reason, experience, all tell us that in the self-support of a land resides its chief strength, and the country of which the soil cannot maintain its population, is always liable to become a prey. This is peculiarly the case in an insulated corner of the globe, whose independent intercourse with other nations rests on the stability of its proper strength, its

naval and military prowess, and the rank which it holds in foreign estimation. Deprived of these, every inlet to the isle may become a point for hostile menace ; no egress for her wares, no ingress for the supplies that her inhabitants require. British feeling revolts from the supposition ; but so long as the Most High ruleth over the kingdoms of men, we must acknowledge that he is able to abase the proudest, and to make the most powerful subject to the vile. The natural abundance with which we are blessed, is assuredly our main defensive strength, and that to which we owe our national ascent to an elevation from which we are now apt to look down upon the steps that led us thither : for in fact, agriculture has ceased to be numbered among the sources of our national prosperity : whatever tends to protect the landholder, is regarded with something akin to jealous resentment by other classes, as an infraction of their superior claims ; and even the entire agricultural class seems in danger of being treated as the common enemy.

Yet they suffer equally with any other class of our poor, and in some respects their com-

mon privations are even aggravated. Their situation and mode of life give them sharper appetites, and hunger is sooner and more severely felt by the out-door labourer, than by him whose blood is vitiated, and his stomach debilitated, by the sickening fumes of a close-pent building, or the confined, polluted air of a densely-peopled neighbourhood. Their dwellings, rarely so good as those of the townspeople, are far more exposed to severities of weather, while medical attendance and neighbourly sympathy are often beyond reach in the hour of greatest need. Whatever advantages the rural district may possess, they are fairly balanced by peculiar disadvantages, and ought not to shut out the field-labourer from fully sharing our commiseration with his fellow-sufferers in different localities. The miseries of the poor, like the luxuries of the rich, differ rather in fashion than in degree, and change according to the town or country residence of those ranks to whom they respectively belong.

The distress existing among the agricultural poor is great; it is also increasing. Enormous accumulations of property, blend-

ing in one whole what was parcelled out among many occupants, give the landholder a dangerous power over the earnings, and thereby over the comforts—the very lives, of the poor on his property. As tenants, the peasantry are greatly held in check by the consciousness, that if ejected from their present tenements, they must probably, to use a familiar expression, go farther and fare worse. As labourers, they cannot hire themselves out for other wages than their landlord is pleased to offer ; hands being so plentiful, employment so scarce ; and the example of a great man affords sufficient warrant for a more humble farmer to fall even below his rate of remuneration. The labourer, thus reduced to work at such wages as may be offered to him, has nothing to fall back upon : no other means of eking out his scanty subsistence, or paying his year's rent : for the accumulating plan includes an evil that strikes at the very root of any independence,—any resource, he might otherwise possess. The demolition of cottages is a part of the system : so soon as a poor tenant can be got rid of, his humble dwelling, in which, perhaps, for generations past, his

fathers have been born and died, is forthwith levelled; his garden of herbs, and patch of pasture and barley, or potato-ground,—all that appertained to it, is swallowed up in the general sweep; and a golden harvest now ripens for the rich man's sickle, where the poor man's spade formerly turned up a portion of his family's slender subsistence. We will adduce an instance by way of illustration, to show the operation of this plan. In a district containing fifteen parishes, with a population of 5852, no fewer than a hundred and seventy-five cottages, having land attached to them, were demolished between 1770 and 1830; and in the same number of years *only twelve* new ones were built. In some instances the buildings may have been left standing, but wholly divested of their allotment of land. And, very naturally, the increase of poor and county rates in the fifteen parishes, up to the year 1830, has been, (omitting fractions) to the following frightful extent.*

* *The Causes of Pauperism and Distress.* By the Rev. E. Dawson, Vicar of Alford.

Parish	Cottages demolished	Built	Rates	Increased to
I.	16	4	£169	£335
II.	8	0	147	769
III.	12	3	138	663
IV.	20	0	95	511
V.	10	1	96	586
VI.	11	0	101	1047
VII.	11	0	166	393
VIII.	9	2	37	156
IX.	9	1	25	282
X.	13	1	36	301
XI.	15	0	46	465
XII.	10	0	121	467
XIII.	6	0	12	60
XIV.	11	0	36	354
XV.	5	0	19	120

The large proportion of this increase belonging to the county-rates, shows that under this system crime has increased along with pauperism: in other words, that the morals of the people have suffered together with their temporal circumstances. Indeed the utter absence of any powerful motive to honest labour, resulting from the fact that nothing to which he puts his hand is or can be his own,—that what he sows a stranger will reap, what he cultivates a stranger will enjoy,—is enough to cramp the energies and deaden the feelings of any man. He feels himself a

supernumerary on the earth's surface ; he has no proprietorship in any thing, save perhaps in a helpless family whose hunger he knows not how he can appease. The most careful management will scarcely eke out the wages of his weekly toil to meet that week's indispensable outlay ; and even if he could by seeking it, obtain extra work for later and earlier hours than his neighbours to devote to toil,—which is next to an impossibility,—the unsatisfied mouths of his household are so many that he could not calculate on any more enduring advantage from his self-devotion than the hearing, perhaps, of fewer complaints ; and no other interest can he take in his employment, no other refreshment can it impart to his mind, than the consciousness that he is sacrificing to those whom he loves, the moments which his fellows devote to relaxation and repose.

Such efforts, if the man finds an opportunity of making them, are rarely long sustained, his mind sinks under its burdens, and in a moment of despondency he gives over the attempt ; if he does not yield to the seduction of the beer-shop, and lose in the intoxicating


cup at once the earnings of his hand, and the recollection of those for whom he earned them. He becomes a reckless, if not a demoralized being; and the contrast which he cannot but draw between his own condition and that of the landed proprietor whose soil he tills, engenders feelings of envy, hatred, and a disposition to violence, of which many are eager to take advantage. He does his utmost, but still finds himself a beggar, either resorting or expecting to resort to parish relief, reluctantly given and thanklessly received. Under a different order of things, such as his forefathers saw, while the principle was yet understood and valued, which induced Elizabeth's legislators to forbid, under a penalty, the erection in country parishes of any cottage with less than four acres of land attached to it, (except in some few peculiar cases,) the poor labourer might indeed have learned to covet the boon of long summer-hours to cultivate his little plot of ground,—his own possession, from which he might hope to extract a valuable addition to his regular pay; and in the interest which a man cannot help taking in what belongs to himself, he might almost for-

get the many drawbacks on his comfort, and labour cheerily to increase the productiveness of what he should himself profit by : but in looking abroad over the face of the country, how rarely are we gladdened by such a spectacle as a cottage standing in the midst of its own little domain ! In a parish where, instead of pecuniary relief, the vestry lets out to a day-labourer a single rood of land, this is the usual result : he pays for rent ten shillings, his tithe two shillings more, and seed-potatoes eight. The ground yields him three hundred pecks of potatoes, which he sells at fourpence the peck ; and this, deducting the pound he has laid out, adds four pounds to his yearly income. With what a feeling of self-respect the poor Englishman places this sum, or even the half of such a sum, among his items of honest gains, is best known to those who have most deeply studied the national character ; and very little knowledge of human nature will suffice to convince us that the country and its institutions possess a hold on that man's affections perfectly unknown to his more abjectly dependent neighbour, who, like a beast of burden, just earns by his daily toil

the provender he must eat, and the roof over his head. The labourer who has gathered in his own little crop, may sit down and consider what he shall cultivate for the ensuing harvest ; and an hour of such cogitation will more effectually draw out a man's energies, will sooner bring his best feelings into play, than any other method we could devise to benefit him. Privations he must endure, disappointments he will meet, unfavourable seasons will affect him, and his innumerable anxieties may know little if any diminution ; still he is a gainer : he has an attraction to his home, a source of respectability that he before perhaps enjoyed not , and, if he be at all of an enterprising character, he will be busied with schemes, which if they be not eminently beneficial to himself or others, are at least innocent, and far unlike what he would be called on to discuss at the pot-house.

Now, it is the absence of these legitimate advantages that constitutes the main grievance of our agricultural poor. They are wholly and hopelessly dependent on what they can gain by toiling for others : they dwell in hovels, singly or clustered, destitute of comfort, cramping the body and depressing the mind. They

lose every particle of independent feeling, such as no native Briton is wholly without, and learn to regard themselves as strangers in the land of their birth; or still worse, as exiles unjustly thrust out of their fair portion in that land. They feel a readiness to become the recipients of public charity, which was, not many years ago, reckoned a disgrace—the very last resort of the destitute—by our noble peasantry; and thus, as among the working classes, personal respectability becomes a chimaera; they follow the lowest instincts and impulses of animal life, and are perfectly prepared to become the scourges of those orders in society who have trampled them down to so wretched a level. We shall have occasion hereafter to show more of the practical working of these mischievous elements; we will close this section by a statement that speaks volumes to the point. Last summer the insurance offices found they had lost so much by insuring agricultural property, that they instructed their agents not only to take as little business as possible in that department, but also to institute careful enquiries into the characters of persons wishing to make agri-




cultural insurances, and into the feelings entertained towards them by the people ; to ascertain whether they were considered harsh masters, &c. The Sun Fire office issued a circular to this effect, and others acted on the same precautionary principle. What but a conviction that discontent exists to a wide extent, and hostile intentions also, among the agricultural labourers, could induce so unusual a mode of procedure? The fact of some London offices declining to insure the lives of Protestant clergymen in Ireland, during the anti-tithe ferment, was regarded among us as fearful beyond precedent ; and surely such a symptom as the foregoing, in the bosom of our own peaceful country, is not to be passed over as of small moment.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SELFISH PRINCIPLE.

AND now to go to the root of the matter, to show why it is and how it is that these four classes, and every labouring class in every branch of employment, suffer from indigence in the degree to which we know they do: All centres in this point—the disregard of fair dealing that is sure to grow, however insensibly, in the mind of a man who is resolved to be rich. The word of God cannot be broken: that word declares that “the love of money is the root of all evil,” and that “they that will be rich fall into a snare.” The very word, *snare*, shows it to be something of which the individual is not conscious: let no man, therefore, place himself on the defensive, pleading his freedom from sordid views, and



indignantly spurning the supposed imputation of deliberate unfairness. His purposes may be the most laudable: he may simply desire to uphold the respectability belonging to his station in society; to educate his children usefully, and perhaps with the surplus of his lawful gains to build hospitals, or endow churches, to promote the interests of science and learning, or to enrich the funds of missionary enterprise. He may be purposing, yea, actually proceeding to bestow upon the poor whatever remains after supplying his own moderate wants; still we must repeat, that the very design of money-getting does expose man to a snare; and the point in which he is liable to fail of fair-dealing is as follows:—

Fair-dealing, whether in merchant or shop-keeper, whether in ship-loads or barrow-loads, requires first, that the dealer should pay an equitable price, both for the materials and for the labour expended on the article in preparing it for commerce; and secondly, that he should exact a fair profit for himself in the transaction. It would be invidious to select any one department of commerce for an illustration: the evil ranges through all; but as a


specific instance may be demanded, we will ask whether the merchant has not been known to freight a ship for some foreign port, with instructions to sell the goods—‘sell at any price, at any present loss, in order to drive away competitors, and secure the market to yourself.’

This is not fair dealing : take it for granted that as much was given for the raw material as it was justly worth ; that all engaged in preparing it for exportation were paid as liberally as they ought to be, and that the goods were of the best quality that might be furnished : still this under-selling speculation, this plan to secure a monopoly, this courting of present loss with an eye to more abundant profit in the end, however sanctioned by example and universality of practice, is part of a system radically wrong ; an effort in the struggle by which each man seeks to overreach his brother ; an operation of the principle of selfishness ; sure in its prospective action so to influence the dealer, that, calculating the probable loss on his merchandize, he will find, in his own bosom, a plausible plea for expending the least possible outlay in its preparation ;

and this same fact being present also to the apprehension of the party who supplies it, will affect the wages paid to the poor drudges whose manual labour brings it from the bowels of the earth, or, whether at the anvil or the loom, works it into form by mechanical operation. We say nothing of the wrong inflicted on any brother-merchant, who, scrupling at, or unable to afford such a mode of doing business, has his exports returned upon his hands, instead of, at least, partially disposing of them in a fairly-competed market.

At home, there is scarcely a branch of trade where the same mischievous and wrongful plan is not occasionally pursued. We are always hearing of prodigious bargains on sale,—some article offered for less than it could possibly be sold at, unless in some other article a profit equivalent to this loss is to be made: and if only equivalent, who would be at the trouble, and incur the risk of such a venturous game? We may point to large establishments, not ‘selling off,’ but in thriving business, undertaking to supply some small matter in very general use, at fifty or a hundred per cent. less than the very preparation, exclusive of the

material, must cost them, if the poor creatures who fashion it are paid with any regard to common honesty or decency in the transaction. How can this be, unless purchasers, tempted by such a lure to frequent the establishment, are enormously overcharged,—in plain English defrauded,—in somewhat else? We cannot exonerate the buyers of these bargains; they must know, if they put their reasoning faculties to the use for which they were given, that a man who is trying to make a fortune by his shop, will not yield to an impulse of such romantic generosity as not only to offer the public in general a very expensive present at his own proper cost, but also to lay out a good round sum in advertising his very benevolent and very preposterous intentions. Somebody, they may be assured, must suffer: the tradesman will take care that he shall not be the losing party, and the bargain-hunter may go, perfectly resolved not to be imposed on—to purchase the thing offered so marvellously below its value, and nothing else; but with what satisfaction can he (or she, for ladies are the principal objects of these tempting lures) pocket the contemptible saving,




under a conviction, that either the starving artificer must lose a portion of the daily pittance with which a few potatoes are purchased, or some open-hearted customer be subjected to imposition, to bring the balance even again? We know of few characters more truly deserving the name of public benefactors than those—and some such there are—who make it a rule never to buy anything under its real, obvious value: if offered in the way of every-day trade, they reject it, and shun the shop: if by some poor creature in evident distress, whose hunger cannot look beyond the loaf that its sale, at any loss, may procure, they take it, and give the full value. In fact, this sort of competition is now so general, that it rests with the class who buy, rather than with the class who sell, to put a stop to it.

There is in London a shop, where, not long ago, we purchased a tolerably good-looking umbrella at something less than the trade price, simply because a single, respectable-looking placard announced that the stock must be all sold off in two days. Showing it to a friend, he remarked, ‘It is an inferior article;’ and on being told where it was bought, he laughed

outright, saying, 'I have passed the shop daily for some four or five years, and never remember to have seen it without that announcement.' To this species of direct lying none can resort who have not divested themselves as well of decent shame as of common honesty ; yet it is practised in almost every street of London ; and sometimes a whole district appears to be selling off simultaneously at such fearful losses, that it becomes an enigma how they can possibly possess themselves of manufactured goods at such prices, putting any sort of profit, any remuneration for time, trouble, and house-room, wholly out of the question. The mystery is only to be elucidated by tracing these articles backwards through all the stages of preparation ; calculating for how little of necessary sustenance the long day's toil could be wrung from the children of poverty, until the eye rests on the solution of the problem in the union-workhouse, and the pauper's premature grave.

This is a crying sin : a sin that cries to God no less eloquently than did the blood of Abel : for though we assume not that the



victims were righteous,—would we might dare to hope so, but we cannot ;—still that they are the victims, body and soul, of this unnatural selfishness, this utter forgetfulness of the means by which our cheap bargains are provided, is beyond controversy ; and seeing that for no offence of theirs against society are they thus immolated, we must account them innocent victims. This brings alarmingly near to us a declaration uttered by the Most High in reference to Jerusalem in the day of her godless prosperity and approaching fall,—“ In her skirts were found the blood of the poor innocents.” Equally open and general too is the participation in these fruits of destructive opposition. “ I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these.” And is not the exhortation addressed to this offending city appropriate to ourselves ? “ O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness ! ” “ Wash you, make you clean : put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes : cease to do evil, learn to do well. Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed ; judge the fatherless ; plead for the widow.” The heart of the nation must be made clean, and set in a right

path: this mist of selfishness that obscures and distorts every object, must be cleared away. We must see our true position before God and towards man: and then will follow the act of reparation, the unloosing of the heavy burden; the feeding of the hungry, covering the naked, and sheltering the homeless. One taste of the pure delight resulting from a deed of self-denying charity, having reference less to an individual case than to an oppressed class, would give a new turn to our thoughts, feelings and pursuits; we should find indeed that

The proper study of mankind is man,

but not as an abstract science, aiming to make acquaintance with a series of physical and intellectual phenomena, nor even the higher range of spiritual investigations: but a practical studying of the best means by which at once to elevate the national character, and insure the national stability, by such a following out of the greatest-happiness system as Jeremy Bentham never dreamed of.

Scripture tells us of a "woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to

field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth," or land. This is the case with many who read or hear the words, without suspecting that they come under the classification. If men bounded their desires after this world's goods, by what they might fairly acquire without approximating to the verge of another woe, proclaimed against him "that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work," or who gives so little it is next akin to nothing; there would be a manifest check put to the augmentation of estates, the embellishment of dwelling-houses, and the countless etcetera of personal emulation and display. Waste land would not be enclosed as now it everywhere is; the village common would still pasture the poor man's cow, and afford picking to his little stock of poultry, instead of being made to bear grain for the wealthy farmer, or to form an addition to the nobleman's preserve. The frame of woman would not be bowed under such burdens as ought not even to be laid on the more robust structure of man, nor would her mind be inevitably vitiated by compulsory admix-

ture with labourers of the other sex, at such times, in such places, and under such circumstances as render mental contamination at least a matter of course. Children would not be immured throughout the live-long day in gloomy buildings, and their exhausting efforts protracted to thirteen, fourteen, fifteen hours of labour, to the utter exclusion of every hope that instruction, even on the most vital subjects may reach them. The common sense of mankind assents to what inspiration declares, "Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour *until the evening*." Twelve hours is the limit prescribed by universal consent for the work of adults; yet under the influence of this money-getting mania, we find employers pertinaciously refusing to bring the daily service even of their juvenile operatives within that limit. No other excuse is or can be advanced; the market, say they, must be supplied, and whatever advantage we sacrifice, others will seize. It may be so; but the policy is very short-sighted that looks no farther than the duration of this demand; this unhealthy, feverish craving for a supply only to be obtained by means pregnant with de-

struction alike to the markets, the goods, and those who bring them there. The least taste of licentious liberty, such as our working population recently obtained a snatch of, is perilous in the extreme to those who know no medium between it and the most heart-sickening drudgery ; combined with imprisonment, and the constant spectacle of luxury in another class that seems to mock their privations, and to count them but as the beasts that perish.

That branch of the system which consists in biting and devouring each other, on the part of the employers, presents a spectacle that would sometimes be ludicrous, if it were not a flagrant violation of the rule laid down by our Lord, as that which should regulate our dealings one towards another. A specimen given at full length may best exhibit the unseemly features of this rage for exclusive profit : we extract it from a provincial paper :

“ IMPORTANT INTELLIGENCE.

“ Notwithstanding the reductions which have taken place of late years in the finer sorts of Saxon wool and also in the cost of manufac-

turing, it is a well-known fact that the price of West of England cloth, to the consumer, has met with no corresponding reduction ; and those who profess to reform the tailor's bills, do so only by substituting a Yorkshire cloth, by which they obtain a still greater profit ; both these causes are detrimental to the interest of the West of England manufacturers, by introducing, for economy, those deceptive, counterfeit, and badly-wearing fabrics, made from a mixture of what is called Shoddy,* which gentlemen would never use if cloth of sterling quality could be procured at

* Copied from the Morning Chronicle of Feb. 25, 1842 ;
' A practice now prevails among most of the Yorkshire Woollen Cloth Manufacturers, of purchasing old woollen rags from the collectors of such articles ; which they tear to pieces, so as to make the corrupt mass wear the appearance of short wool ; this they mix with longer wool, spin, weave, and dress up, so that the cloth appears to the eye and hand as glossy, close, and fine, as a genuine article, but the wear is quite another question. The imposition upon the public is one of at least twenty-five per cent. This practice is worthy of the attention of the Legislature, if it be not already illegal ; for the public are cheated, the consumption of wool is lessened, and the prices pulled down. Very recently a gentleman of this city witnessed the delivery of about twenty packs of the article alluded to, to a manufacturer near Leeds.'


a moderate price. But so enormous are the profits required by the retailers of cloth, and the trade is confined to so few hands, that this desirable object can only be obtained by having the cloth direct from the manufacturer. In order to give this system a trial, we have lately supplied our private friends with single coat-cloths at exactly the same price we sell wholesale to the London factors; and the consequence has been that, from the difference in cost to them, we have had such a steady increasing demand from private recommendation, that we have determined to give the public the benefit of so advantageous a system.

“ We have confined our operations to black cloth only, and we have two qualities of fineness; the cost of our best Saxony broad cloth (of which it takes one yard and three-quarters to make a dress coat: two yards for a frock coat, or for a dress coat and waistcoat) is 16s. 6d. per yard. This is a splendid cloth, of the best manufacture, and one which we most confidently recommend for its superior texture, and the beauty of its finish. The price of our Fine Saxony cloth (requiring the

same quantities for the above purposes) is only 12s. 6d. per yard. This article is far superior to the cloths generally used, and is particularly recommended where substance and durability are desired. The cost of a coat made in the best style from the Fine Saxony cloth will not exceed £2, and a coat of the Best Saxony will be obtained at less than 50s. ; the difference between these prices and those paid by the public, constitutes the enormous profits of the wholesale and retail dealers.

“We also offer black cassimeres for Trousers at equally low prices ; two yards and six nails is the usual length required ; our Best Saxony is only 6s. 9d., and our Fine Saxony 5s. 9d. per yard. These cloths are double-milled, and warranted of the best colour, and not to spot, or shrink, or wear rough. Any other lengths required will be supplied.

“It is evident therefore, that in family mourning, and to professional gentlemen, the saving will be very considerable ; and as black is undoubtedly the most respectable, so it may now become the cheapest wear ; and, in order to prevent the possibility of imposition, every parcel, however small, is marked as follows :



the Best Saxony broad cloths and cassimeres are all sealed with blue wax, and labelled with a bill of parcels printed in blue ink. The Fine Saxony broad cloths and cassimeres are all sealed with red wax, and labelled with a bill of parcels printed in red ink. By this distinction any person, although he may be no judge of cloth, will be able to know the quality at first sight.


“The facilities afforded by the introduction of the penny postage, and by the remittance of small amounts by money orders, to be procured at any post-office, at a charge of 3d. if under £2 ; or from £2 to £5 only 6d., will give the public the first opportunity they have ever had of obtaining real West of England cloth direct from the manufacturer, of such superior quality, and at such a moderate price as cannot fail to give the greatest satisfaction.

“I feel confident that the system needs but one trial to merit and ensure a continuance of your approbation and your recommendation. I shall esteem the favour of your commands, and remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

—, near Stroud, Gloucestershire, July 14, 1842.

What a picture does this present of the state of things in trade ! First, it is alleged, perhaps with truth, that fraud is very common : then it is urged, that because of these frauds people should leave off dealing with all woollen-drapers and tailors, condemning two great classes to present ruin, and should send all their orders to the mill of Mr. —, at Stroud, in Gloucestershire. This is a sample of what is going on universally ; men who ought to make their way by industry, assiduity, and fair dealing, now, in almost every department of business, rush before the public, charging every one but themselves with dishonesty, and offering to sell at half the prices usually demanded. All good feeling, all neighbourly consideration, amity, and sympathy, must thus be necessarily destroyed ; and already we see one token of coming destruction among our mercantile host, “ Every man’s hand against his brother.” Neighbours, in every sense of the word, and with no reasonable inducement to act an unneighbourly part, men in trade are transformed into enemies to each other. It is not through the operation of any hostile impulse, but the gradual evolv-



ing of a new, and surely a pernicious principle, the growth of which we may possibly trace by selecting one trade, and observing what has recurred within the memory of man to change its aspect.

In the bookselling business—we take it as a sample of the rest—at the beginning of the present century, each wholesale house had its own connexion ; and if the business was properly done, that connexion remained unbroken. For example, if a country bookseller left Rivington's, and sent his order to Longman's, then Longman would go to Rivington, and ask the reason of such change ; ' not wishing to interfere with his connexion.'

But about thirty years since, the wholesale houses, not content with legitimate business, first began to send out travellers ; whose object, however, at first was merely to visit their own customers, solicit orders, and collect monies. So far all was right and fair : but after a while these travellers overpassed their bounds ; they began to go into every open shop, and to solicit orders without any regard to the connexion already subsisting between those retail tradesmen and others. This effected an entire

change ; for competition immediately began, and those who stuck to the old system lost all their business ; while those who seized upon it, forthwith commenced preying on each other. With these facts before us, it is not difficult to account for what we now witness and deplore. To such an extent does this speculation proceed, that whereas the expenses of travelling have always been estimated as amounting to ten per cent, a house in the stationery business lately commenced running for two and a half per cent. profits. Utter disorganization is the result : for a time, the most reckless succeeds the best—then he fails, and his creditors are plundered. This brief sketch, taken from one conspicuous trade, is a specimen of what is going on in the buying and selling concerns of the whole community.


The wrongs sustained in every department of the commercial world through the pernicious maxim, ‘ Every one for himself,’ are inconceivable. Deception is looked for as a thing of course ; the more wary guard themselves, and take it for granted that others do the same : if there be a fraudulent intent, the loss must fall somewhere ; and each seems to

consider his duty fulfilled when he has taken all due care that it shall not fall on him. We are adducing illustrations, and will yet add another, much in point.

A well-known author entered into arrangements with one of the first establishments in London to bring out a costly series of works. These publishers being wealthy men, and of high repute, and the works selling extensively, no apprehension was entertained by those who had supplied paper, printing, binding, &c. They had received their orders from the author, but the goods had been delivered at the publishing house. The author, suddenly, became insolvent; the creditors went to the publishers, whose wealth and honourable name had been to them a sufficient guarantee. The reply they received was, 'You never had any order from us; you must look to those who employed you.' This, it has been stated, was the insolvent himself. The next question asked was, 'But where are the proceeds of the sales?' 'We have taken those,' replied the publishers, 'and placed them to Mr. ——'s credit, in liquidation of a large debt which he owed us upon former transactions.' The

creditors had sent in several thousand pounds' worth of property, as they believed to a wealthy publishing establishment ; but found their claims referred to a ruined spendthrift, from whom they could never hope to recover a farthing ; and to whom indeed, they would probably never have thought of supplying ten pounds' worth of goods on his own account. Nobody can here be taxed with fraudulent dealing : the publishers gave the advantage of their names to circulate a book, the profits on which were to pay an old debt due to themselves : the author gave his orders personally, and never directly represented the publishers as being the responsible parties ; yet the sole loss in the transaction falls upon honest tradesmen ; who could not have been such heavy losers, had not that divine precept been set at nought, which bids us " Look not every man on his own things, but every man on the things of others."

To appeal to that old-fashioned characteristic of the Englishman, love of country, against the indulgence of this ruinous propensity, would be more likely to excite a smile of derision in the cheek, than to awaken a responsive note in the hearts of those who are



enslaved to it : but some there are who deeply feel the national stigma affixed to us, by the free circulation of facts, or admissions sufficient to blast our character for common honesty, to say nothing of the highly honourable principle for which we were once famed. It was recently explained in Parliament, that several of our chief articles of staple manufacture, particularly woollen cloths, have been nearly excluded from the markets of Germany by the scandalous tricks played by our manufacturers and merchants. And it would seem that those who have gone from hence to our colonies, are not slow in practising similar manœuvres on those whom they have left behind. The trade of cheating is indeed endless in its varieties ; nor are our public journals backward in supplying illustrations. One man lately confessed in the Court of Bankruptcy to having ordered and received a parcel of goods from France, of large value, he being insolvent at the time, and handing the goods over immediately to a third party, who gave him cash for about two-thirds of their value, which cash was never entered in his accounts.

Another eminent dealer acknowledged that

he had given a man who owed him £19,000, a good character for solvency to a third party, in order that the debtor might get goods largely from that third party, and send them in to him, for the reduction of his debt.

But it is in the management of public companies that such manœuvres are sometimes most glaringly exhibited. In October 1841, the managing directors of the Bank of Manchester met the proprietors, and declared in the most solemn, emphatic manner, that the capital of the company—£900,000—was all safe; and that there was a surplus of £17,000. In October 1842, these directors had again to meet the proprietors, and were obliged to confess that the whole of this large capital was gone, and that £100,000 more must be subscribed and paid, in order to close the account. Of course, the statement of 1841 was utterly false: Why then was it made, unless the managing directors, or those at least who took any active part in the management, were then helping themselves or their connexions to the money of the company, and meant to do so as long as any of it remained?

It is fearful to see the extent of crime into



which this indulged habit of selfishness will lead, when gain is the object. We have not forgotten the appalling disclosures made about two years since, when a judicial investigation took place on the subject. A mercantile house had been set up in London, with no other view than to send out rotten old ships, laden with suppositious bales of goods, for the sole purpose of being wrecked, and in that way to plunder the insurance offices. The lives sacrificed in this horrible speculation led to a general outcry, when, by some accidental, or rather providential circumstance, the thing was discovered ; but it soon died away.


Such being the progress of a species of enterprise wholly unknown to our forefathers, and opposed no less to the spirit of true liberty than it is to justice and fair dealing between man and man, what is to become of the labouring poor, who are counted but as necessary parts of a huge piece of machinery, set at work for the sole advantage of their betters. Can we wonder that their poverty and need are made the occasion of oppressive exactions of toil at the lowest possible cost, to bolster up such a desperate system ? Can we

even refuse credence to another fact, for the accuracy of which, though name and place are not here given, we can vouch. A man of business was lately heard to say concerning some large additions to his premises, fitted for the reception of several hundred work-people, that he wished to see none but women employed there. On being asked the reason, he replied, 'It is this: men will tire and flag; but set a woman to labour, who has a husband and children at home depending on her earnings, and she will work herself to death for their sakes. A little extra pay will keep her at it all night, as well as all day—there are no labourers like those women.' Surely if ever the Lord does for England what he promised to do for Judea, "I will cause the evil spirit to pass out of the land," we shall no longer be cursed with the presence of calculating devils, whose business it is to teach Englishmen to compute what profit they may make of the tender sinews and sensitive flesh of young wives and mothers, when the sick husband and craving babes are to be fed upon the living sacrifice. Talk of cannibalism! It is refined humanity to this.

CHAPTER VIII.

WANT OF SANITARY REGULATIONS.

THE evils that we are endeavouring to search out are so multifarious, so diverse, and deeply rooted, that nothing short of a settled determination to discover what is right, in order to do it, will carry a man through the investigation. Some would appear to have held by the old adage, that when things come to the worst, they will mend ; and seeing that matters could not be much worse than they are in reference to the poor of our land, solaced themselves with the speedy approach of such amendment. To us it appears no doubtful issue, that if we do not adopt very speedy and efficient means for ameliorating the condition of our suffering population, they will proceed to help themselves at a greater cost




than we are prepared to pay ; but we would rather urge as a solemn Christian duty the application of remedial measures, than enforce it by pointing out the menacing posture of events. To us it ought to be enough that God has commanded us to care for the poor ; that a blessing is promised to him who considereth them : and as we would shrink from being found guilty at once of rejecting the Lord's commands and despising his promises, we must be able to adopt Job's language, " The cause that I knew not I searched out." We now proceed to exhibit, without distinction of classes, the general disadvantages under which the poor, in their own homes, are placed as regards those fundamental points of well-being and well-doing,—health, and morals.

The poor man's health is his all. Against the pressure of poverty he may bear up to-day, hoping for some favourable turn of events to bring him employment on the morrow, and conscious of power to undertake it ; but let sickness assail him, and with what heart-breaking aggravations does it come ! We all know something of the depression of mind consequent on organic derangement ; the dim-

ness of mental vision, interposing where the prospect is otherwise bright, and the three-fold gloom enveloping one already sombre. Yet we have many solacing resources ; not only the supply of all the body's craving, but also sympathizing friends, cheerful converse, engaging books, and free access to the inspired word of God ; to which none ever sought for consolation in vain. In the great bulk of cases, where sickness enters the poor man's hovel, the reverse of all this is his lot. Such friends as he has can only add their lamentations over the present, and sad forebodings of the future, to his. It is well known to all who have visited the sick poor, that the remarks made in their hearing, as to their sufferings, danger, privations, and the distresses accruing to their families, are such as would never be permitted to reach the ear of an invalid among ourselves : of books to amuse or to elevate the mind, what can they know ? their sorrows are too real, too weighty, to be beguiled by fiction ; and what can philosophy do for them ? her air-spun theories would become a mock, if offered to the writhing sufferer, who, prostrate under the hand of dis-


ease, hears his children crying for bread. Even the balm that ought to trickle into every habitation on British ground, the divine cordial that God has freely given, the promise of the all-sufficient Comforter, the sweet foretaste of an incorruptible, eternal inheritance, even this is bound in its course, by the uninstructed ignorance, the unremoved enmity, of the natural mind and heart ; and dwell as we may on all its desolate features, the most vivid picture our fancy can draw of the diseased pauper, in the wretchedness, the filth, the helplessness, the hopelessness of his lot, leaves us far short of the reality. Disease not necessarily infectious frequently becomes so by the impure exhalations with which it loads an already vitiated atmosphere, deficient in all that might neutralize the hostile effluvia ; those exposed to it being equally destitute of means to invigorate the frame, and so to assist the efforts that nature makes to repel a noxious influence. Thus, a common sore throat, or other trifling ailment, brought by an individual into his own court or alley, may decimate the neighbourhood. ‘A merciful provision to thin a redundant population,’



say some calculating theorists ; but let the pestilence extend to their precincts, and the messenger of death cross their own thresholds, we shall soon find, in their eager recourse to every available means for baffling the enemy, that they consider he has exceeded his commission : that God *is* a respecter of persons ; and that the sword of the destroying angel was whetted only to slay the poor. We address not ourselves to such as are past feeling ; but to those who would gladly alleviate, if it be possible, the sufferings, and improve the lot of their fellow men ; and who, admitting the truth of our statement, which is, indeed, undeniable, are ready to enquire, How can these things be obviated ? What mode of prevention would you suggest ? Can poverty be banished out of the land, or can sickness be excluded from its abodes, or the natural results of their combination averted ?

Assuredly not : but there are predisposing causes in full operation throughout the country, engendering evils which, but for their baneful presence, would not exist ; and aggravating a thousand-fold such as would, even in their absence, arise. It is to the counterac-

tion of these pernicious tendencies that we address ourselves ; and however hopeless the task, we will not shrink from demonstrating to the comparatively rich at how moderate a sacrifice of time, and thought, and means, they might achieve a work that appears impracticable only because we are accustomed to consider it so : because the evil is very general, of long standing, and daily on the increase : it is like a vast flood, coming in upon the land, certain to sweep away the existing embankments, and ultimately to overwhelm us. Shall we therefore sit still, and yield to its gush ; or shall we bestir ourselves, here to raise a bulwark, and there to shape a channel, until what now menaces speedy destruction, may become not only innoxious but a blessing ? In itself, the element ministers to many valuable uses ; it is an ordinance of God that the poor should labour, and by their labour the land is enriched ; but that the poor should groan under accumulated miseries, that their lot should be one of unmitigated suffering, their lives counted as nothing, and their natural propagation, ordained as it is, and commanded too by God himself, be res-



tricted to suit the accommodation of the wealthy—that man should dare to say to his fellow-men, “Ye shall not be fruitful, ye shall not multiply, ye shall not replenish the earth,”—what is this, but impiously to fly in the face of the Most High, to provoke him to jealousy, and to expose ourselves to the withering consequences of that threat, “For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord : I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.”

We proceed then to exhibit, as briefly as may be, such particulars touching the prevalence of disease among the poor, as can be shown to result from the neglect or misconduct of those with whom the duty of prevention rests; together with the obvious remedy. We shall follow into their dwellings the same classes that we have already glanced at in their various occupations, and in the same order; noticing first cities and towns, the usual localities of manufacturing and commercial poor; secondly, rural districts, inhabited by miners and agricultural labourers.

It is shown by tabular returns, duly authen-

ticated, that if the deaths caused during one year in England and Wales alone by epidemic, endemic, and contagious diseases, of a character, the greatest proportion of which are proved to be curable, be computed, it is as if the whole county of Westmoreland or of Huntingdonshire, or any other equivalent district, were annually depopulated; and the race swept away, replaced by the growth of a new and feeble population, living under the fears of a similar visitation. The annual slaughter in England and Wales, from preventible causes of typhus alone among persons in the vigour of life, appears to be double the amount of what was suffered by the allied armies in the battle of Waterloo. These diseases, within the experience of living persons, prevailed more extensively at sea than they do on land; and the deaths from them in ships of war doubled the number of those slain in battle. Sanitary regulations have lately rescued our seamen from this scourge; and similar means would be just as efficacious on land.

Four things are indispensable to the prevention of fatal diseases in towns; paved streets,

covered sewers, ventilation, and a supply of water. Let any person residing within reach of a street, or district, or neighbourhood, where fever is often prevalent, examine its condition in these four particulars, and he will find some marked instance of omission in one or more of them ; unless, indeed, any collection of noxious matter should exist in the vicinity, not to be obviated under either of the foregoing heads. Slaughter-houses, repositories for manure, and accumulations of water, required for manufacturing or other purposes, may co-exist with the absence of the more ordinary roots of evil ; but without such occasional nuisances, a district, however poor, that is kept dry, thoroughly cleansed, exposed to the free action of atmospheric air, and adequately supplied with pure water, will not be found to generate or to spread disorders of a malignant type. It is, however, notorious, that the quarters inhabited by the poor are found to be characterized by the absence of these necessary advantages. Large open drains, ditches, and gutters ; uncovered cess-pools, and unre-moved heaps of animal and vegetable matter in a state of decomposition, are as common in

the lanes, and courts, and suburban waste-grounds inhabited by the poor, as they would be considered a portentous anomaly in the stately squares of London. In such places also there is almost invariably a defective, broken pavement, in the holes of which rain and other water accumulates, until each becomes a miniature pool, exuding its own malaria, to the destruction of the poor children who sport around it. Frequently the ground is unpaved; and then it possesses the properties of a sponge, continually kept moist with a deleterious element, to be drawn forth and dispersed in vapours pregnant with death. Again, the position of these tenements, erected only with a view to the amount of rent that a given space of ground may be made to produce, forbids a free passage to the breeze; no strong current of air sweeping through the region, which for lack of such merciful provision, holds the nauseous effluvia so suspended in a stagnant atmosphere, that, though a portion of the blue arch of heaven may be visible far above, an unseen canopy of death intervenes; and to the wretched inmate of the blighted spot that bright reality of health is

but a phantom ; the intangible phantom of disease a tremendous reality. How often do we hear, when a young person asks permission to make some visit of charity to a poor afflicted object, the reply of parental caution, ‘ I dare not let you venture into so unwholesome a neighbourhood.’ The fact is not a thing to be searched out ; it is notorious, proverbial, the great public nuisance in every town ; and the best mansion that could be built in such a locality might stand untenanted for years, ere it should find occupants among the class to whom it was adapted.

The supply, too, of fresh water is an indispensable requisite to health. In its foul state, the element is not only pernicious as a beverage, but ineffectual, of course, to cleanse either linen or any other substance ; and thrown out, as it always will be, by the squalid inhabitants, reckless of health and cleanliness, incorporated with other filth, it emits a noisome smell, deleterious as all putrid smells are. In the heart of towns, where pure water can only be fetched from a distance, or supplied to order by a monopolizing company, the privation is found to exist in a frightful

degree, through the want of inclination, or of strength or leisure to go so far for a pailful of it, and of means to pay for the regular supply. The poor creatures, living in the midst of every impurity, become assimilated to their disgusting element : they have no desire after cleanliness, no wish to shake off the contaminating influences surrounding them, even when an effort of their own might partially do so ; and while their richer brethren content themselves with keeping at a safe distance from the danger, and sparing their feelings the shock of witnessing what they do not intend to remedy, death may gather in his annual harvest from the reeking soil. No individual holds himself singly responsible for the consequences of general neglect : if they perish, they perish.

So far, the removable causes of fatal disease are external to the habitations of the poor : we must now look into their dwellings. These, of course, vary in different places, but generally they may be said to consist of tenements two or three stories high ; the first, or keeping room, opening into the street, with a bedroom over it, and another above that. Some-

times the houses are double ; and sometimes they rise to a greater height ; but in most cases, where the nature of the soil will admit of it, they have a cellar, unconnected with the interior of the house, entered from the street by a flight of steps—which also affords the only mode of ingress for light and air—rented out, either by the landlord or the occupier of the dwelling, to some family, a grade lower in destitution. From this abode of misery there constantly arises a steam of exhalations—of coal and tobacco-smoke, the fumes of spirituous liquor, and every description of animal effluvia. Very rarely are these dens paved ; the ground in its natural state is their floor ; and soaking up innumerable liquids thrown upon it, sends them back in foetid damps to saturate the bedding, hang upon the walls, and slowly struggle out at the narrow opening which, at night, necessarily incloses, as in a box, the heterogeneous contents of the cellar ; including fever and asthma ; consumption, measles and small pox ; the lying-in woman and the drunken man, just as chance may order the assemblage for the night. These cellars are almost always open to temporary lodgers, the price de-

manded varying from twopence a night to fourpence ; and it is a common thing to find as many as twelve or fourteen human beings, generally strangers to each other, stowed in three or four wretched beds, or on trusses of straw ; and not unfrequently a corpse among them. The rooms above certainly enjoy an advantage in point of ventilation, such as it is ; but they receive, as well through the broken flooring as by the door and window, a full share of all that ascends from the subterranean apartment. The intense heat engendered by the crowding together of so many human beings, together with the process of cooking for them, as in summer it tends to produce the worst kind of fevers, so in winter it renders the abrupt transition of the half-clad lodgers, from such a temperature into the cold rain or biting frost of the streets, the prolific source of ague, of rheumatic affections, and consumption. Be it also remembered, that it is no matter of choice to the wayfaring man, whether he will take up his temporary abode in such pest-houses ; or if there be an alternative, it lies between this and the open air, where he would be seized as a vagrant :


for it is made penal to prefer the clear vault of heaven to the low ceiling of a crowded cellar. The poor wretch who has not the means of paying for better accommodation, must avail himself of this ; and very often, particularly among the most necessitous of all poor, the Irish, a shelter is gratuitously afforded to him who has nothing wherewith to pay. The penniless stranger, who would not be permitted to rest for a moment on the step of a rich man's door, is received by those whose daily bread depends on what they can get for their wretched accommodations, invited to share the scanty meal, and to repose, rent-free, in the corner that a more profitable tenant might otherwise occupy. Munificence like this is frequently practised, in the dreariest dens of misery : and often does the poor traveller communicate to, or bear away from the hospitable cellar, the seeds of some contagious disease, to ravage many a home ere its deadly progress be stayed. We saw the Asiatic Cholera introduced into a healthy rural district, through the gratuitous harbouring, in a very humble cottage, by some of his own country-people, of a poor creature who had

slept the preceding night in an infected cellar. He died in a few hours, and the neighbourhood lay for some weeks under the visitation, with great loss of life.

Another constant generator of disease in the houses of the labouring poor is their bedding. Any thing better than a straw palliase is rarely met with, and this is a luxury. Loose straw, damp, mouldy, decomposed and swarming with vermin, is the general substitute for a bed, with very rarely a blanket to hold it together ; for blankets are convertible into money, and many wants more urgent than that of a warm covering at night press for its sacrifice. It has been ascertained that multitudes make the ground their bed, with nothing under them or over them except the clothing worn throughout the day, which is not laid aside at night. We are no levellers ; we would guard with jealous care the distinction of ranks that God has evidently established ; we would not take from the man of property his lands, tenements, or possessions of any kind ; but we must say that after dwelling for a while on this faint picture of realities that we have often contemplated in the centre of London, and in

many towns and villages of the land, we regard as somewhat worse than mere wanton luxuries, the down beds, the damask hangings, the gilded cornices, the sparkling lustres, the costly services, and jewelled apparel of another class. The impartial eye of God looks down on both : at the same moment lie open before Him—the crowded saloon of the noble, the luxurious board of the wealthy citizen, the expensive elegancies of more retired life,—and the loathsome dens where unchecked vice riots in all its grossness, unalleviated disease gnaws the gaunt frame of poverty, and starvation itself looks out from the straining eyeballs of those who, either on a happy or a horrible equality, must be throughout eternity the companions of their now unapproachable brethren. He sees it all !

But we must not digress ; we supply data to those who desire to investigate the evil, that they may devise a remedy, or at least attempt an amelioration of it. We have portrayed the more prominent features, external and internal, that characterize the spots where our labouring poor congregate in towns. It is obvious that relief does not, cannot lie within




the reach of the sufferers. They have neither the means nor the authority to pave streets, construct sewers, open thoroughfares, or rebuild the houses they live in. Supposing them even anxious to carry away from their doors the various kinds of filth now cast before them, no receptacle is appointed into which it might be emptied ; and with the necessary blessing, the natural luxury, of pure water, they often cannot provide themselves. The individual who is old enough and strong enough to carry a full pail repeatedly, the distance of a quarter of a mile, is competent to earn the price of a morsel of food by regular labour ; and such as are too idle so to satisfy their own hunger, will hardly exert themselves to procure the means of cleanliness. In fact, destitution is so enervating ; rags, filth, ignorance, vice, and disease, induce such habitual disregard and disrelish for external purity, that it amounts to a physical incapacity for the effort ; and as to paying a rate for the regular supply, they cannot look forward to the necessary means for satisfying their landlord's weekly or monthly demand, unless some extraordinary concurrence of favourable events place a few shillings

in their hands. Accordingly they must be left in the cultivation of that one commodity which is always rife among them—disease—and to form a nucleus of pestilence to extend throughout the neighbourhood, whenever it pleases God to send a sickly season ; or else the matter must be taken up by a different class, prepared to stand in a battle where few may be with, many will be against them. The legislature must interfere, both vesting new powers in the local authorities, and making the due exercise of those powers compulsory under severe penalties ; so that a foreigner may walk through the length and the breadth of our towns without having just cause to say, England appoints her poor as sheep to the slaughter ; she provides magnificent fever-hospitals, it is true, but renders them insufficient, almost valueless, through the multitude whom she abandons to sure disease, rather than incur the cost of covering a cess-pool. She exhausts a quarry in erecting monuments to a few favourite names in one quarter of the town, while in another her bravest sons are dying by dozens for lack of a cart-load of paving-stones before their doors. We will not further pursue the degrading contrast.

The air of cities is never wholly free from contamination ; the freshest breeze that gushes through its broadest streets lacks somewhat of the health-giving purity that renders its sweep upon the hill-side, or along the open fields, so exquisitely reviving. This deterioration must of course exist in proportion as the channels which it finds are choked, and blocked up by buildings. The entrance into a square or open street exposed to the same breeze that blows into a narrow lane, intersected by alleys, and studded with courts, receives tenfold benefit from it, compared with the latter, even though their respective atmosphere were alike untainted ; but when to the material obstructions we add the invisible though equally real presence of heavy sluggish air, clogged with unwholesome matter, which has to be displaced without the aid of a regular current, or with a single narrow current that bears the fresh breeze rapidly past the transverse openings where its entrance is especially needful, we must perceive the imperative necessity of artificial aids to render efficacious the most indispensable operation of nature in such regions. Yet, open as you may the ventilation,

if the pure element so admitted has to gather up in its progress the filthy exhalations from such receptacles as we have before spoken of, it becomes an active, wide distributor of the poison that before hung stagnant over its peculiar haunt. Thus are the very blessings of God, by man's cruel neglect, tainted with a curse ere they reach the poor man's dwelling.

This leads us to the other division of our inquiry, the predisposing causes of disease in rural districts, villages and townlets, favourably situated, and largely intermixed with garden or meadow land. Such are found conducive to health among the population generally; often resorted to by the inhabitants of cities, for the advantages of pure air and refreshment: still the visitations of fever in its most destructive forms are frequent even there in localities occupied by the poor; and whatever epidemic may make its appearance in other parts of the neighbourhood, is sure to assume in that quarter a more active, malignant, and enduring character. In order to supply at once the most accurate and best authenticated description of what prevails, we will now quote verbatim from the Report of



the Poor Law Commissioners, presented to Parliament in July last.

Mr. John Fox, medical officer of the union of Cerne, in Dorsetshire, gives the following description: ' It is somewhat singular that seven cases of typhus occurred in our village, heretofore famed for the health and general cleanliness of its inhabitants and cottages. The first five cases occurred in one family, in a detached house on high and dry ground, and free from accumulations of vegetable or animal matter. The cottage was originally built for a school-room, and consists of one room only, about eighteen feet by ten, and nine high. About one-third part was partitioned off by boards reaching to within three feet of the roof, and in this small space were three beds, in which six persons slept; had there been two bed-rooms attached to this one day-room, these cases of typhus would not have occurred. The fatal case of typhus occurred in a very small village, containing about sixty inhabitants, and from its locality it appears favourable to the production of typhus, synochus, and acute rheumatism. It stands between two hills, with a river running

through it, and is occasionally flooded. It has extensive water meadows, both above and below, and a farm-yard in the centre, where there is always a large quantity of vegetable matter undergoing decomposition. Most of the cases of synochus occurred under circumstances favourable to its production. Most of the cottages being of the worst description, some mere mud-hovels, and situated in low and damp places, with cess-pools or accumulations of filth close to the doors. The *mud floors* of many are much below the level of the road, and in wet seasons are little better than so much clay.'

This, it may be said, is a selected case ; we will then turn to another. It is contained in a letter from the clerk of a midland county Union, and is taken at random.

Parish of Leighton Buzzard :—' Several of the worst of the cottages are disposed of, and it is supposed will be pulled down next spring ; but there are several now occupied that are wholly unfit for dwelling-houses : having no bedrooms, families are living and sleeping in the same apartment, some of which are without any other flooring but the bare ground,

and consequently cannot possibly be cleaned. One cottage in particular, now occupied by the family of William Smith. (Smith himself being in the workhouse, as he is afflicted with a disorder that requires cleanliness, which it is in vain to hope for in the wretched hole his family are in.) The room, if so it can be called, is about ten feet long by six wide ; one end of it is formed by part of the boarding of a large barn, very much out of repair, through the holes of which any one having access to the barn can see the family at any time ; there is no back-door nor privy, all the filth being thrown out close to the front door. The poor woman's confinement is approaching, which may occur in the night, when the four children are in the bed with her, who having no other place to go to, must of course remain.

'In the parish of Ellesborough, the poor have been for some time past permitted to build hovels in the waste, and, although some of these are much better than others, the whole of them, with the exception of one built by a wheeler, are without upstairs rooms. In some instances these places are formed by being excavated in the banks, over which a

lean-to roof is placed ; these are necessarily extremely damp. It is feared that a poor woman of the name of Room, who has three children, is at this time suffering from consumption.

‘ In the hamlet of Egginston, there are twelve tenements belonging to a charity, formed originally out of two barns ; these are always inhabited by paupers of the lowest grade, and who, in their present condition, would find a difficulty in obtaining any decent cottage, as tenants to a private individual : they are generally the resort of persons who are turned out of their houses for non-payment of rent, &c. Two only of the tenements have a room up-stairs, and all, except those two, have dirt-floors : the other ten tenements consist of one room each. In two or three instances this room is divided by a sort of partition, put up by the inmates. The largest number of persons occupying one of these tenements is eight, viz., a man, his wife, and six children ; the eldest child aged sixteen, the youngest an infant. There is no bed in the house, the whole family sleeping on two heaps of straw confined in two corners of the room by stakes driven into the ground ;

none of the tenements are-ceiled ; there are no back-doors, nor windows for ventilation ; the filth is thrown out into stagnant pools in front of the tenement ; the stench is at all times great, and in hot weather it is of course proportionably increased. With the exception of one, the rest of the tenements are occupied by families with children of all ages. The number of persons in the whole is 55.'

We will now travel north, and examine the dwelling of a Border peasant. Dr. Gilly of Durham thus describes the cottages of the hinds,—' They are built of rubble, or unhewn stone loosely cemented ; and from age, or from badness of the materials, the walls look as if they would scarcely hold together. The chinks gape in so many places, as to admit blasts of wind : the chimnies have lost half their original height, and lean on the roof with fearful gravitation ; the rafters are evidently rotten and displaced ; and the thatch yawning to admit the wind and wet in some parts, and in all parts utterly unfit for its original purpose of giving protection from the weather, looks more the top of a dunghill than a cottage. Such is the exterior ; and

when the hind comes to take possession, he finds it no better than a shed. The wet, if it happens to rain, is making a puddle on the earth floor, (this earth floor, by the bye, is one of the causes to which Erasmus ascribed the frequent recurrence of epidemic sickness among the cotters of England more than three hundred years ago : it is not only cold and wet, but contains the aggregate filth of years, from the time of its first being used ; the refuse and dropping of meals, decayed animal and vegetable matter of all kinds, which has been cast upon it from the mouth and stomach, these all mix together and exude from it.) Window-frame there is none. There is neither oven, nor copper, nor grate, nor shelf, nor fixture of any kind ; all these things he has to bring with him, besides his ordinary articles of furniture. Imagine the trouble, the inconvenience and the expense which the poor fellow and his wife have to encounter before they can put this shell of a hut into anything like a habitable form.' And we must also imagine what will be the consequence if the parties be too indolent to take a vast deal of trouble about it, or too poor to bear the burden of such expense.

From these descriptions, applicable to every part of the kingdom, we draw the inference that cases of the worst disease must be of constant occurrence, even in the most healthful situations among the poor, clearly preventable by the doing away with such disgraceful dens and pest-houses ; all the evils of which the half-starved people readily encounter for the sake of such a rent as leaves them a trifle more to expend on necessary food. That Englishmen are found to let out such styes to their fellow-countrymen, and pocket the price of their residence in them, we believe, just because we see it ; otherwise it is scarcely credible. It will be observed that the hovels of Egginston, constructed out of two old barns, afford shelter to certain defaulters who, for being unable, probably through sickness or want of work, to pay the rent of their original dwellings, (often, no doubt, much on a par with those above described,) were ejected to make room for more solvent victims. We say victims, because the man who, for the money it brings, keeps such a tenement standing, does for that same sum sell his brother man's life, and the lives of his family ; and he


will find it so when the hour shall come that must cite him to appear in a court where neither the technicalities of law nor the plausibilities of self-deception will avail : where the Judge who shall try him has been present at all his secret calculations of gain, has directed the occasional plea of better feeling, pointed the unwelcome sting of conscience, and most intimately knows all the workings of his mind, from the first successful repression of rising conviction, to the last bootless struggle against death and judgment : where the sentence once pronounced will be irreversible ; and the penalty to be paid eternal. We do say that to cast out the poor for profit, and to leave him houseless because he cannot at the present time pay for a shelter, is a sin to be repented of without reserve, and without delay.

But selfishness tells a different tale, and as yet no voice is heard sufficiently powerful to drown its exclamations : nothing short of compulsion will deter covetous men from pursuing a lucrative course, however sinful ; and to mulct every man who rents out a hut unfit for human habitation in a penalty exceeding the profit, however effectual, would be a difficult matter.

CHAPTER IX.


ERRORS OF THE DAY.

THE adage so much in favour with our ancestors, 'Live, and let live,' has given place to another equally familiar, but wofully different in its origin and tendency: 'Take care of number one.' This is the key-note of our harmony: its recurrence is the main character of the piece, and all others are regulated in subordination to it. We have painfully proceeded through a mass of evidence, that "because of oppression the land mourneth." We have shown the different classes of industrious poor, toiling along a path of heart-sickening distress, seldom brightened by a gleam of hope, as regards either this world or the next, and have endeavoured to display the root of the evils that spring up on every side. Happy would it be for us all, if the remedy



could be in like manner discovered ; or if men in general were as ready to apply themselves to the removal of an evil, as they are to admit its existence. Various devices have been framed for the public good ; and foremost among them stands one which we cannot pass by. It professes to deal with what it considers the main cause of all our troubles, past, present, and to come ; namely, a redundant population. To drain off the existing surplus by distant colonization, and to apply a " preventive check " to the natural progress of increase, is the grand panacea. It comes recommended by names of note, in language at once authoritative and persuasive ; and if we could discover in it any promise of beneficial operation, any actual relief for the country or its inhabitants from the pressure that bears them down, we should, of course, gladly entertain it, after bringing it to the great test of that law which man may not abrogate. We are bound, however, to say, that being weighed in the balance it is found wanting. Theoretically it stands opposed to God and man : practically, it would establish and extend the dominion of him who is man's enemy and God's.

What is our object ? To lighten the burden of national distress, to raise the tone of national morality, to bring the country into the state described by the Psalmist, who says, " Happy is the people that are in such a case ; yea, blessed are the people whose God is the Lord." In fact, the last is primary in importance ; because public piety is the only sure groundwork of public morality and prosperity. The Creator and upholder of the world is surely its rightful Governor ; and man's suggestions are only admissible as they harmonize with the laws that He has laid down. Unto Christ all power is given, both in heaven and on earth : from him, therefore, all inferior authority is derived ; all temporal dominion is exercised on his behalf. This being admitted, our way is cleared of numberless difficulties ; for we have before us, every man in his own home, the perfect standard of right, by which to measure the projects submitted to us. Neither is the revelation of God's will dark or obscure : our Lord went up to a mountain, the sides of which were thronged with multitudes, chiefly the humble, the poor, the ignorant, the afflicted, and He



sat down and taught them. He dealt not in parables then, but simply, plainly, laid down a code of laws, a system of ethics no less complete than perspicuous; and what he there declared is the sum and substance of the whole Bible.


We shall merely cite two or three samples of the doctrine that is pressed upon us, as peculiarly suited to the emergency of the times, by those who recommend the depletive method; and to begin with an extract from the celebrated Colonel P. Thomson, to which Dr. Chalmers has admiringly called attention, giving it entire in his elaborate work on Political Economy. The Doctor, advocating the selfish principle in man, thus introduces his quotation:—

‘Mr. T. Perronet Thomson, in his able tract on the “True Theory of Rent,” has stated the effect of this difference with laconic felicity and force. “A labourer in Ireland will live and bring up a family on potatoes: a labourer in England *will see the world unpeopled first.*” “Englishmen have the physical capability of living on potatoes as much as other men, but fortunately they have not the

habit ; and though it might be wrong to say they would starve first in their own proper persons, *they will utterly refuse to multiply* upon such diet, the effect of which on population is ultimately the same.” “ The Englishman will not live and bring up a family on potatoes ; because, though he may *consent to live* on them, when he can positively procure nothing else,—habit, custom, the opinion of the world around him, have made it in his eyes contemptible, irrational, absurd, for a man to be living on potatoes when he has the opportunity of getting anything better. In his hours of prosperity, therefore, he will, to a certainty, *solace* himself with *bacon*, and most probably *venture upon BEEF!!!* and as this absorbs a greater portion of his income in what he views as necessary to *his individual existence*, it proportionably reduces his disposition to *burden himself with new mouths*. If the Irishman had the prospect of all this bacon and beef, he would view it as convertible into potatoes for a family like a patriarch’s. The Englishman thinks it but decency to swallow all, and omits the family.’

Now, we should scarcely have considered

it fair to select such a paragraph as the preceding, when seeking an epitome of the doctrine in question. The coarseness, the flippancy, the loathsome spirit of gluttony, and the scandalous libel on the English character that it contains, would have induced us to discard it, as a mere caricature of the extreme notions of his party ; but when Dr. Chalmers fixes upon it, as best suited by its ' felicity and force ' to express his own views, we meet him on the ground he has selected, and marvel. The tenor of the thing is to eulogize the man who shall most insolently fly in the face of his Creator : the man who, having before him God's command, " Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth," and having within him the law of nature, bearing concurrent testimony that such is one end of his existence, shall dare to answer, ' I will not, unless means be given me beforehand to insure my never being left for a day dependent on the truth and faithfulness of God for the indulgence of my own and my children's appetites. No, I will eat my morsel alone, I will have it in my power to add drunkenness to thirst ; I will live in adultery, fornication, and all unclean-




ness, the natural result of pampered flesh, but I will not marry. *I will see the world unpeopled first*; whether through the sterility consequent on universal prostitution, or the murder of my bastard offspring, and those of my bacon and beef-eating brethren, by their despairing mothers, who now, thanks to the amended law, must rise from childbed to earn by their labour (if any one will employ them) the morsel that shall enable them to give suck. 'Tis no affair of mine: whether strangled or starved, it comes to the same thing: *the effect on population is ultimately the same.*'

And does that worthy Scotchman, Dr. Chalmers, really believe that this is a 'felicitous' portraiture of the Englishman? God forbid! We hurl the foul aspersion back on its author and abettor, and point to the scenes faintly pourtrayed in our preceding pages to show, that the peasantry of England, amid all their wants, their woes, their ignorance, their vices, hold dear and sacred the tie of wedlock, and share with their offspring the scanty produce of their ill-paid toil. We do not deny the offence imputed to the still poorer Irishman: we believe that if on the one hand bacon and

beef *ad libitum*, were brought to his cabin-door, with an imposed condition that he should gormandize, in single blessedness, upon the savoury bits ; and on the other hand a sufficiency of potatoes to satisfy the cravings of a family, with liberty to dispense to every hungry traveller who passed that door ; we do not deny, nay, we strenuously insist upon it, that out of every thousand poor Irish cottagers, nine hundred and ninety-nine would clutch the potatoes, and laugh the beef-eating celibate to scorn.

A family like a patriarch's ! Mr. Perronet Thomson doubtless thanks his stars that he did not live in patriarchal days : but does he believe that the God of the patriarchs is also the God of Englishmen, unchangeably the same ? Does he know that in the immutable word of this unchangeable God it is written, " Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD, and the fruit of the womb is his reward : " and again, " Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord." The preventive check, of which so much is talked, is no check upon licentiousness : quite the reverse : the abuse of God's




gifts so ' felicitously and forcibly ' advocated by Mr. Thomson, would speedily issue as did the like spirit of selfish gluttony of old.—
 " When I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlot's houses. They were as fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife." The words that immediately follow are striking indeed: " Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? "

The unmasked, unmitigated selfishness that forms the soul of this particular system, is absolutely revolting. It is, in fact, the carrying out of the same principle that gives rise to all oppression. The land is productive enough to support its population, though that population were doubled, and to leave the upper orders too in possession of abundant wealth; but it will not admit of the sudden accumulation of enormous riches by one particular class without impoverishing others; and it is almost incredible how broadly, how unblushingly the principle of which we speak is avowed, yea, gloried in, by the class in ques-

tion. At Manchester, a short time ago, a contributor to the Corn-law Abolition fund of £50,000, openly said, 'I give £100, in the belief that if the object be attained, I shall profit ten times £100 by the increase of my trade.' Another observed, 'It is simply a question whether the land-owners shall ride us down with their long purses, or whether we shall ride them down with ours.'

The one idea that has taken possession of men's minds appears to be, 'How may I sell more goods than I do now?' Accordingly, tell them that by changing any particular line of national policy this object may be attained, and they stop not to enquire how such change may or must affect millions of their countrymen, or how ruinously it may operate on the very existence of the empire; the *ignis fatuus* of present gain dances before them, and on they rush in hot pursuit. Tell them, for instance, that though all duty on imported corn were abolished, they have not the least ground for believing that the Germans would cease to protect their own manufactures by retaining heavy duties on our goods; the suggestion, however obviously reasonable, is unpalatable,



and they give no heed. Represent to them that the creation of a new trade with foreigners, by taking their corn for example, would be, not an additional trade, but simply a change of customers; and that five or ten millions annually spent by England with the agriculturists of the continent would only be five or ten millions less bartered with the tillers of her own soil; they turn a deaf ear to your self-evident proposition, carried away by the excitement, the competition, the new field of daring speculation, that the opening of a foreign market brings before their view. They are making haste to be rich, and into the snare they will fall; drawing with them the whole country.

We are not solicitous to pursue this subject far, as it does not, in its details, come within the scope of our plan; but it cannot be wholly passed by, standing, as the theory does, on a foundation opposed alike to the known will of God, and to the obvious interests of the nation at large. We are told, "The prudent man foreseeth the evil," but this is short-sightedness indeed! Work may become plentiful, hands innumerable may be employed that are

now idle ; every mill going, every lane and alley, garret and cellar, crowded to suffocation by labourers in full work ; and even the agricultural poor, thrown out of employ by the abundance of imported produce, may find occupation in the towns ; but for how long is this to endure ? A rupture with any of the nations on the fertility of whose lands, rather than on that with which God has blessed our own, we had chosen to throw ourselves for daily bread, would answer the query. An over-worked, a demoralized, a destitute population suddenly cast out of employ, with no resource but the hoarded substance of their late employers on which to lay their hands, would start into violence around us ; and the wealth, the pomp, the glory, and the beauty of England must descend together into the pit of destruction.

We would avert this : we would search and try our ways, and return unto the Lord, while yet the path is open. We would put far from us the cold suggestions of hard-hearted selfishness, and in place of the grasping, monopolizing, expatriating system that grudges the poor man so much of his native soil as he

may rest his foot upon, we would rather restore the ancient landmarks, which have been in evil hour taken away by those who forgot the emphatic injunction, "Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless; for their Redeemer is mighty, he shall plead their cause with thee." "Rob not the poor because he is poor; neither oppress the afflicted in the gate: for the LORD will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them."


We would not encourage English ladies to step forward and write little fictions for the guidance of the simple; putting into the mouths of honest poor men such disgusting language as this, addressed to their wives: 'If you had not had such a swarm of brats, we should all have fared better;' or teaching a father thus to speak to a daughter, in reference to her approaching marriage: 'Barton is able to support you; ay, and as many brats as you may chance to have. He has neither kith nor kin; and his father has left him the shop, and all the stock in trade, and a good lot of money beside; so there is no harm can come of your marrying him. Quite the reverse, you

see, deary, *for you are a burthen upon us*, who have so many of your brothers and sisters to maintain ;' or when plotting to send a young girl out of the way because his son had a notion of marrying her, to make the same worthy economist remark to his wife : ' I think it a sin and a shame to bring children into the world just to suffer, and send them out of it. First a cradle, and then a coffin ; and little else between than fretting. *But let us have no grandchildren born to die off in that way :* we must live and learn, or we shall live to little purpose. *So get Betsy Bloomfield a service as soon as you can.*' Whatever Miss Martineau or Mrs. Marcet may consider our village poor ought to say on the subject, we do not believe that, apart from their instructions, such language would often be heard among them. It is a sort of practical atheism that may be acquired, but it does not come naturally. The humble folk have a saying : ' Where God sends mouths he will send meat ;' and it will be an evil day for England when that homely saying, expressive as it is of confidence in the providential care of Him who "feedeth the young ravens that

call upon him," is exchanged for the infidel cant, the brutalizing selfishness, and savage reproaches against wife and child, contained in the foregoing extracts. Ladies, no doubt, have a peculiar liberty of speech, and a comparative immunity from harsh reprisals, when they express in their own persons the opinions they may have imbibed; but when a lady creates a village ruffian to be the mouthpiece of most revolting anti-social and anti-christian principles, we cannot extend over him the shield that covers his fair inventress: however we may and do lament the perversion of a female mind to aid in so bad, so unfeminine a cause. The most horrifying abominations of Socialism are avowedly reared on the foundation laid down in these pernicious little books, which prepared the gross minds of the most ignorant classes for any practical application of the system that Satan might suggest. Very far, we are sure, from the purpose of the writers was it to pave the way for such hideous enormities; but when the bright lamp of truth is wilfully hidden, and man's shallow reasonings substituted for the infinite wisdom of God, who shall tell where it may end?

Mr. Perronet Thomson, as again quoted

by Dr. Chalmers, is exceedingly edifying upon the why and the wherefore of the 'preventive check.' He argues, says the doctor, 'with his accustomed shrewdness ;' and 'felicitously remarks,' on 'the standard of enjoyment in the middle classes of society,' which Dr. Chalmers treats of, page 92 of his Essay: 'Public opinion and custom require, for example, that a shopkeeper shall have a good coat—shall drink at all times malt liquor, and sometimes wine, and give them to his neighbours ; that his wife and daughters, if he has any, shall wear clean linen, and moreover not wash it themselves ; and that when they travel it shall be by the stage-coach, and not by the waggon. Though he may do without some or other of these things in a certain degree when necessity presses, he cannot and will not do without them in the main. If, therefore, he is a man of foresight, he will at all events *defer adding to the population of shop-keepers*, till he sees a fair prospect of supporting a family in the way which public opinion pronounces to be respectable.' By this of course, the small shop-keeper is to understand that he must secure the good coat, the malt liquor, and wine ; and 'do without' the wife and daughters. This will operate




beneficially in another respect, as it may prevent the necessity for some poor man having a wife or daughters to get up the linen of the shopkeeper's family. But to proceed ; Mr. Thomson is explaining how ' bankruptcy is the check to the indefinite multiplication of traders, as the evils arising from diminished food are the check to the indefinite multiplication of the lower classes of labourers.' He then shows the only plan by which ' the higher order of traders might afford to remit something of their own rate of profits ; ' i. e. allow the lower classes of their labourers a sufficiency of food to live upon. ' If a great brewer for example, would drive his family to the two-shilling gallery in one of his own drays,—there would be some chance of the thing being brought to pass.' Where was Dr. Chalmer's wisdom, where was his BIBLE, when he set the *imprimatur* of his honoured name to such arrant nonsense as this ? Gladly we turn from it to the testimony that can never mislead ; the wisdom that can never err.

The extent of territory occupied by Judah and Israel in David's days, did not quite double that of the principality of Wales. The

king took a census, and the returns showed the population to be about seven millions. In the peaceful, prosperous reign of Solomon, they must be supposed to have increased yet more, and so we find it, for the language employed concerning them is : “ Judah and Israel were *many*, as the sand which is by the sea-shore for multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry.”

Here, there was a small country, most densely peopled, yet rejoicing in abundance, filled with food and gladness, neither knowing nor fearing distress. To what shall we attribute it? Certainly not to a long course of prosperity, for when David commenced his reign, the land was overrun by the Philistines, who devoured its increase, oppressing and slaying the people ; and nearly up to the time of their numbering, internal wars had perpetually interrupted the current of national prosperity. Moreover, the testimony to their vast increase, their plenty and joyfulness, is given very early in the reign of his successor ; before the natural effects of those protracted disturbances could have ceased to operate. We must look elsewhere for the root of this marvellous prosperity.

Colonies they had none : they were themselves a colony—a single family multiplied almost beyond computation, but confined within the limits of that land, the especial inheritance assigned them of God. Commerce was almost unknown to them until Solomon's time, and then we hear of no exports. They do not appear to have had manufactures sufficient for their own consumption, their first commercial dealing of any note being the importation of linen, &c. from Egypt. Consequently their wealth did not spring from this source ; nor was their internal happiness the result of profitable speculations in any one of those branches to which we are accustomed to refer the origin of a nation's blessings. Israel and Judah owed all to the due administration of a system of laws, not devised by the wit of man, but dictated by the unerring wisdom of God, who deigned to legislate for a people chosen from among all the nations of the earth to show forth his praise ; and while, as in the reigns of David and Solomon, the designs of the Almighty Lawgiver were carefully worked out, his blessing visibly rested on the people, rendering their possessions invaluable



and themselves invincible. “Surplus population” would have sounded strangely in the ears of an Israelite ! One of the main blessings promised to their obedience was, that there should be neither male nor female barren among them. The man who feared the Lord, was told his wife should be as the fruitful vine ; children were counted, without any distinction of classes, as olive-branches around the table, as arrows in the hand of a giant ; and he was pronounced happy who had his quiver full of them. Circumscribed as was the territory, each family being restricted to its own lot, and prodigiously rapid as was the increase of population, the man who had ventured to talk of a preventive check would have stood a better chance of being stoned than eulogized. Two things alone secured that favoured nation from the approach of want or the apprehension of want :—the land brought forth her increase ; and God, even their own God, gave them his blessing. There were among them rich and poor, in all the various grades, from great possessions down to absolute destitution ; but for the poor a compulsory provision was made, rendered by a beautiful paradox, per-

fectly voluntary too ; for the Lord forbade his wealthy servant to grudge what was set apart for a needy brother ; and a glance at the scale of liberality fixed by divine appointment, may well make us blush at the niggardly aid which we grumble to yield from our comparative abundance to rescue our neighbours, our fellow-Christians, from starvation ; not to speak of withholding the just wages of their toil.

Considering what has been noticed, that the land was subdivided, after being parted among the tribes, into portions assigned to the heads of their different families, we must believe that as the population multiplied, a large number remained without any inheritance, save that which was awarded to them under the general title of ‘ the poor ; ’ of whom it was said, they should never cease out of the land. The principle of beneficence, inculcated and enforced as it was by their Almighty Lawgiver, formed a part of every Israelite’s personal religion. How impressive is that injunction given in the book of Deuteronomy :—“ If there be among you a poor man, of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates, in the

land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother : but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release is at hand ; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought ; and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee : thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him : because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land : therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy in the land.” These feeling injunctions were superadded to the actual law, which commanded that the tithe of every third year’s produce should be stored for the poor ; a sixtieth part of every annual crop set apart for them, and a share of the whole land’s production in the seventh year


given to them. These, with minor beneficent provisions, and a crowning prohibition against the taking of usury on any loan, form the model furnished by the Lord God Almighty for nourishing the poor of a land ; and let none pronounce it impracticable in our day, none object to it as unsuitable, until, on however small a scale, the experiment has been tried, and has failed.

It is not, however, in any man's power to remodel our existing institutions on this divinely-appointed pattern : we can only protest against the adoption of a principle diametrically opposed to a system of the Lord's devising ; walking contrary to him at every step. For excessive and continuous accumulation, the parent of our greatest difficulties, was by this plan utterly precluded ; yet excessive and interminable accumulation is the avowed object of almost every man among us who embarks in any course of life where indefinite profit is of possible attainment. In reading the recently-published memoir of a late truly estimable and pious physician, we were painfully struck by an instance of this, related as a matter of commendation too, that he began

his professional career with the expectation and determination of very speedily making £4000. per annum by it. A little experience led him to despair of realizing this golden dream ; but he carefully ‘ kept the grand professional secret ’ of its hopelessness from young students whom he heard luxuriating in the same prognostics. Yet before he attained the age of forty he was making that very sum of £4000. a year by his practice—at forty he died. We do not cite this instance as casting a slur upon the memory of a man respected by all who knew him ; but simply to show how universally this mammon-hunting spirit is diffused among us ; and that, however applicable to our need would be the enforcement of a preventive check on surplus accumulation rather than on surplus population, we cannot hope to see the principle established by the Divine framer of Israel’s code adopted among ourselves. We are so little disposed by nature to make the law of love the standard of our dealings with those below us, that we often hear the very principle of a compulsory provision for the poor hotly contested, and by men who do not appear to think that it would

be incumbent on them to make any great voluntary sacrifice, to attain the same ends. Yet if the subject received the consideration that it ought to receive at the hands of every Christian man, in how many ways, and at how small a sacrifice might the poor be enabled to eat !

It is true, the magnitude of the existing evil naturally discourages individual effort. What I can do, says the benevolent man, is but a drop in the bucket : it will effect no perceptible deduction from the enormous amount of suffering. This is, however, a fallacious mode of reasoning : the bucket is filled with such drops ; and even if it be so that a noble example fails to win public attention or to induce general imitation, still be it remembered, that as individuals the poor suffer and perish ; as individuals must both they and we stand before the judgment-seat of God : that no man will be called to account for more than his own personal share, by commission or omission, in the general transgression against the poor ; and that on him who considers the poor and needy, the blessing is pronounced without any reference to the narrow space within which his actual



CHAPTER X.

PAUPERISM.


IN the course of last year, one million eight hundred thousand persons received the relief of paupers in this kingdom; and there are towns with ten, twenty, and thirty thousand people in a state bordering on starvation. If such a fact were stated to us concerning a country of which we knew nothing, the natural inquiry would be, 'Does it arise from the unproductiveness of the land itself, with the want of means to purchase the surplus produce of other countries?' No; must be the reply; the soil cannot be unproductive where hundreds of thousands of quarters of corn are known to be stored up in two or three towns for many months together; nor can that country lack wealth to which all

others flock, to beg or to borrow, and never seek in vain.

Whence then comes it that nearly an eighth part of the whole population should have been compelled to show, that neither by inheritance, by hoarding, or by the present labour of their hands, could they procure sufficient to avert that heavy blow to the poor Englishman's feeling of native independence—an appeal to charity? We have shown the nature and results of labour, as generally engaged in by our industrious classes. We have followed them to their dwellings, and exhibited the struggle there sustained to bear up against difficulty, privation, and disease; we have also noticed the cruel practice of exceedingly overworking a few, to the rejection of many among whom the same amount of labour ought in fairness to be divided, and now we must show to man what he does not like to look upon, a scene of abject suffering which he would fain persuade himself is no way chargeable upon him; but of which, if he make no effort towards procuring relief, he must endure a portion of the responsibility: for the word is as steadfast as any other word of God, which

declares “ To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”

A man applies for work, and cannot obtain it ; or he is too much enfeebled by sickness or privation for any labour that comes within his reach. He has, we will say, a wife and two children, which is far below the average number. It is admitted that these four individuals must, in a climate like this, have a shelter over their heads, and some covering for their bodies, and certainly they must have food to eat. To keep a house, even the poorest cottage, is out of the question, unless they find a landlord who allows the poor to live rent free on his estate ; and such a landlord would rarely have a vacant tenement at his disposal. We will therefore conclude that the poor man has already given up his cottage, and sold whatever disposable article he had, and has sheltered his little party in a single room, at the lowest possible rent ever asked for such accommodation ; and that they never taste meat, butter, tea, or sugar, but eat the coarsest bread, sometimes softened in a little skimmed milk, sometimes dry, or with a cup of water, and now and then a hot potato, if




they are plentiful, and sufficient fuel can be procured to boil them : we ask, supposing these four persons could thus live on one shilling per week each, how are those four shillings to be procured, or one-fourth of the four ? The man goes to a farmer, or tradesman, and asks to be employed for whatever he may be pleased to give ; they have the full number of hands already at work, and cannot pay supernumeraries : the woman is willing to wash, to scour, to nurse, to perform any menial office even for her equals, on the same miserable terms, but for one who can afford a penny in remuneration she finds twenty eager, like herself, to earn that penny ; and probably with twice or thrice the number of clamorous children to satisfy. The little ones would go on a message, if big enough, or put their hands to anything within their power to do ; but the poor, half-naked creatures have no better chance than their parents ; and if the weather be chilly, must either run about or huddle together to keep a little warmth in their shivering bodies, which, for lack of sustenance within and clothing without, have lost their natural glow. To this strait the unem-

ployed labouring man must come ; and having fallen so far, several courses are open to him. In the country, he may, if courageous and untroubled by qualms of conscience, become a poacher, a sheep-stealer, or a highwayman : in towns, a petty thief, pickpocket, or burglar. The vigilance of the police-force, now distributed throughout the land, renders these callings exceedingly difficult and hazardous ; and the man who could bring himself to commit daring crime rather than see his wife and little ones actually starve, often lacks nerve to contemplate the consequences to them of his death or transportation. He finds that expense is not spared to guard the preserves of his rich neighbour from the irruptions that his unrelieved wretchedness might tempt him to make ; and half-a-dozen well fed game-keepers are found effectual in throwing some scores of starving paupers on the parish. Not that we would leave temptation in the poor man's way ; God forbid ! but the idea of a well-stocked, well-fenced preserve, with all the outlay of money and risk of murder connected with it, that a few gentlemen may enjoy the gratification of a battu, presents a grievous

contrast to the reality of the picture which we are so faintly sketching.

To the parish, therefore, the destitute family must go ; for the rigid enforcement of the vagrancy act puts public begging out of the question ; and the rural police are now not less efficient in protecting the country-gentleman's door from such as would ask an alms, than their brethren in the metropolis are in defending street-passengers from a similar appeal. Under such a system of guardianship against the cry of distress, blind Bartimeus might have sat by the road-side in vain. Yet no ; for Bartimeus appealed to Him to whose ear the stifled, yea the UNUTTERED cry will force its way ; who, when Israel as yet knew him not, nor looked unto him for relief, but only sighed by reason of the bondage, could say, " I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters ; for I know their sorrows." And as surely as he knew the sorrows of Israel's poor, he knows the sorrows of England's poor ; and the very ignorance in which they are left of his power, his willingness to save—the destitution of




their souls—is among the heaviest of the burdens that oppression lays upon them. We not only silence their appeal to man, but bar their approach to God, while we leave untouched the barrier that natural sin and ignorance place between man and his Redeemer.

So far we have described a general suppositious case: we will now relate one out of the thousands of actual recent occurrences that might be adduced. The scene is within some fifteen miles of London, and the circumstances as common as they are distressing. In a hamlet, wholly agricultural, the farmers lately discharged a dozen labourers belonging to the parish, who, of course, found themselves in the plight above described, altogether without resource. The parish has become part of a Union, under the New Poor Law, the Board of Guardians being located in a small town, just five miles off. One poor man, having a wife and three children, went to lay their miserable case before the board, and to request admittance into the workhouse. Without a morsel to eat, he started early in the day to walk these five miles; after long waiting among a crowd of applicants, amid the press

of business attending a board-day, he was listened to, and his case taken into consideration. It was computed that if admitted to the workhouse, these five individuals would cost the parish fifteen shillings per week ; and the man being able-bodied, willing to labour, the Board ordered the relieving-officer to 'find him work.' Accordingly, this officer set him to break stones and mend the roads, the wages being *one shilling a day*. The poor man, therefore, throughout this winter, has had to leave his miserable fireless home, at early morning, to walk five miles ; pass the day in a laborious, out-door occupation, and finally to retrace the five miles at night ; taking home with him for his own food, fire, and clothing, and the support of his wife and three little ones, *one shilling*.

Insufficient as any system hitherto known must prove to meet the dreadful exigencies of daily increasing pauperism throughout the country, it is certain that the poor man had once a claim on the commiseration of those who hold the relieving power, which now he has not. When every applicant was more or less personally known to the dispenser of public relief for



his district, a measure of feeling, call it neighbourly, or what you will, might be expected to exist in the bosom of the officer, which is wholly out of the question under an organization of aggregation. Give a man the supervision of distressed families within an easy walk of his own house, he will know, and if he be a humane man, he will care for them all : but mass together the heaps of poverty scattered about for miles in every direction, and in places where he is absolutely a stranger ; give him coadjutors between whom and himself as little sympathy exists as between either him or them and the poor ; pay him a salary to deal with all this misery as summarily and as savingly as he can ; and you make him a mere machine : you seal up every channel of kindly feeling, rendering it impossible for the strivings of humanity on behalf of distressed outcasts to prevail, among the distracting multiplicity of duties imposed on him by an authority so absolute, as to visit the slightest deviation from its arbitrary rules, the smallest concession of general expediency to the heart-rending peculiarities of some extraordinary case, with dismissal from his office. The free, voluntary


services of respectable inhabitants formerly rendered in their own parishes, and the discretionary power lodged in hands well versed in the affairs of the neighbourhood, was one of the fairest features in our national polity, as regards the poor; the hardships inflicted on them under the amended system, can only be estimated by taking in detail the miseries of an extensive Union.

A remarkable illustration of the advantages attendant on subdivision of duties, in relieving the poor, is afforded in Berlin, which, with a population of 300,000, including as large a proportion of the necessitous as Edinburgh or Glasgow, is kept free from beggars, and from the appearance of extreme want in any part, solely by the judicious working of a plan the farthest removed from centralization that can well be conceived. We will give some particulars of this rare piece of mechanism, from which our readers may draw their own conclusions, as to its natural results: quoting from the notes of a recent traveller, whose intelligence and veracity cannot be impeached. In 1821, the management of the Prussian poor in large towns was given over by the govern-

ment commissioners to the municipalities, who appointed Poor Directors, among whom the magistrates and town deputies act *ex officio* only, and are therefore changeable ; the rest are permanently elected. After trying on a single police-district the plan they had conceived, they extended it over the whole city of Berlin, which they divided into fifty-six districts, each under its own commissioners, generally from five to nine in number, according to the amount of pauperism within their circuit ; and each containing, if possible, its own physician, surgeon, oculist, and apothecary, all of whom are paid monthly for their services. The poor-commissioners are benevolent persons, who act gratuitously ; selected from all callings, save the clerical and legal professions, by the poor-directors, at whose request they accept the office. They meet at the end of every month, to make a report, and settle all business. The routine of their duties among the poor is as follows : we give it in Mr. Laing's words, without curtailment.

‘ If a pauper desires relief, he must apply to the president of the poor-commission of the district in which he resides ; who receives the

application, inquires into the grounds of it, into the situation, family connections, and other circumstances of the applicant ; and if it be not so utterly groundless as to be summarily dismissed, refers it to the poor commissioner in whose section of the district the pauper is living. He sends another poor commissioner from another section of the district, to make inquiry also in the neighbourhood, and at the last place of residence in the city. These commissioners inquire of the landlord, the neighbours, the last employer ; and in the monthly meeting of the whole commissioners of the district, a report of the result of the inquiry is made, and the case decided. In urgent cases, any one of the poor commissioners of the district may, with consent of the president, grant an immediate relief, but this must be reported at the first monthly meeting of the whole. If the pauper has applied for relief, and the president of the poor commission finds that, provided the pauper's statements be correct, it should be granted, he takes an examination-book with him in which there are twenty-five printed questions, which the applicant is bound to




answer, concerning his age, state of health, capability of work, former trade or occupation, causes of its not supporting him now, number, age and capability of work of the members of the family, situation of the relations who by law are obliged to support him, and, if there be any children in the family, whether they have been vaccinated, confirmed, sent to school, &c. This examination-book is handed to the two commissioners appointed to examine into the case, who have also their printed questions in it, to be replied to by the result of their inquiries concerning the applicant; and if sickness, or physical inability is stated by the pauper, the physician of the commission writes his testimony also in the book; and lastly the determination of the district poor-commission upon the case, as to granting or denying relief of a permanent kind, is written in this examination-book and carried into effect by the commissioners. This examination-book is the ground-work of a standing personal document, or certificate of the case of each individual pauper, or alms-receiver, by which every circumstance relative to his pauperism is known. If he changes

his abode, and applies to the president of the new district poor-commission for relief, as being a pauper from another district, the examination-book is sent for, but the president proceeds entirely as if it were a new case, and only takes the former as subsidiary to the inquiries instituted by their own commissioners ; and as each commission sees with its own eyes, it may happen that the decision of the new district-commission may differ from the former. The examination book follows the pauper wherever he goes as pauper ; and his case, after repeated examinations, can scarcely be one not entitled to relief.


‘ In cases of medical assistance being required, the applicant, to save delay, gets a note from the poor commissioner of the section in which he lives, and takes or sends it to the president to be countersigned, which is done after a summary inquiry into the poverty of the sick pauper ; and it is a sufficient order for the medical officers of the district for attendance and the necessary medicines.’

One of the peculiarities of this system of relief is, that orders or money for firing are often given, not to the single pauper, but to



his landlord, to keep the house regularly warm. The poor commission also specially see to the school attendance of the children of the poor.'


Now contrast such a plan as this, involving a great deal of close scrutiny, and requiring much careful attention, yet so dividing the labour, and bringing each man's appointed work so near to his own door, with the pleasing consciousness attached that he is showing mercy to the poor, and voluntarily doing an act well-pleasing in the sight of God ;—contrast it with the confused mass of ill-defined business, through which our Poor Law officials are paid to toil as well as they can ; and the conclusion must be an acknowledgment of vast superiority on the side of the former. It is morally impossible that every case occurring within the sweeping extent of a union of overgrown parishes should be fairly sifted out, or even properly understood by the Board of strangers before whom it must come : and as frequently the most deserving are the least able and willing to put forth their claims prominently, where such a struggle is going on, and so little encouragement to address



any official man on the grounds of personal knowledge or Christian commiseration ; it cannot be doubted that noisy mendacity frequently obtains what ought to be bestowed on the more modest, less clamorous sufferer. The fearful amount of pauperism among us would call for a wider extension, and perhaps a more minute division of the Prussian plan, and doubts may exist whether a sufficient number of respectable individuals would be found prepared to incur so much trouble apart from all remuneration. The money-getting mania is certainly very strong upon us : ' Every man for himself ' is a maxim unfavourable to the claims of the poor ; while to rise up early, and late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness, seems to be the self-inflicted doom of every man of business, until he shall have placed himself and his family above the common vicissitudes of life. But if this be counted a valid objection to that care for our own poor which is one of the appointed tenures by which we hold our own more abundant portion of God's gifts, it presents a frightful picture of national selfishness, avarice, and contempt of the divine com-


mands. The author from whom we have borrowed our sketch of the Prussian plan, remarks, 'To the actual efficiency of the system in the two great points of relieving fully, humanely, and economically, all real distress,—and in the suppression of all street-begging, and much vice and idleness,—the most hasty traveller who enquires at all into the state of the poor, or who even contents himself with his personal observation as a stranger walking about the town, must bear the fullest testimony.' That no such results are arrived at by our own system is acknowledged on all sides ; while the heavy tax levied on the pockets of those whose sensitiveness in that quarter is usually proportioned to their apathy in what concerns the fate of the destitute, is a source of constant irritation. We know of nothing better calculated to reconcile a man of ordinary humanity to the payment of what the law demands on their behalf, than a frequent opportunity of witnessing their bitter privations, and the relief administered through funds that he assists to provide. On the other hand, the best feelings of the impoverished class are sure to be drawn forth

by the spectacle of their richer brethren really exerting themselves to apply in the most effectual manner such relief as they can afford them ; while the frigid demeanour of men who dare not permit themselves to feel, and who dole out what cannot be withheld under a conscious apprehension of being deemed too prodigal, and thereby hazarding the emoluments of office, dependent as it is on the arbitrary will of certain distant functionaries, secure in their calm abstraction from all visible, audible sources of compunctious visitation. Tenderness for the poor is not among the spontaneous impulses of man's evil heart ; if it were so we should not find line upon line and precept upon precept, enjoining it in the word of God ; we should not find men in the unreclaimed barbarism of their natural state, ridding society of supernumerary mouths and helpless members, by habitual infanticide, parricide, and human sacrifices. Selfishness is the governing principle of our race, kept in check, either by the implanting of an antagonist principle from above, or by the coercive power of legal enactments, which, visiting the offence with a higher degree of suffer-



ing than that which might be avoided by the commission of such offence, restrains the self-loving instinct by an appeal to itself. On this point, God has a perpetual controversy with his creatures ; with those especially who, being told by revelation what great things the Lord hath done for them, receive together with the glad tidings, this touching injunction, " A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." The Apostle reiterates it : " Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another : " and again, " Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ? " These are words of deep import : they were spoken and dictated by Him who does nothing in vain ; and in legislating for the relief of the poor, it behoves us to see that we do our utmost not merely to provide for the distribution of the relief without which they must perish, but also that such mode is adopted as shall tend to keep alive that feeling of brotherly love towards the " poor neighbour," which


God requires as the groundwork of our almsgiving. This seems to be wholly overlooked, utterly contemned by the great bulk of those who legislate for the poor ; and who seem never for a moment to revert to such a principle, when shaping out the course to be pursued by the administrators of their laws. They make that an impossibility which God has constituted an imperative duty ; and behind such impossibility their agents naturally shelter themselves, under a breach of the divine commandment. As the framework of society stood, in its most perfect form, ordained and regulated in its minutest particular, by God himself, the poor man was, even in the least extended, most colloquial sense of the word, neighbour unto him who relieved his wants ; and the injunction of a neighbourly regard for him, met no other bar to its fulfilment than the natural hardness and selfishness of the human heart. The admirable arrangement of the relief system in Berlin, owes its excellency to the simple feature of consonancy to the divine plan ; and its undeniable efficiency to the attendant blessing. But take the most experienced, most successful, most hu-



mane of all its many directors, place him on the list of our commissioners or assistant commissioners, make him either a guardian or a relieving officer, or master of a work-house under the existing system here, we should see him, apart from all foreign habits, prejudices, and predilections, so deplorably out of his element, so fettered in every movement of heart or hand, that he must either retire in disgust, or be quickly steeled into such a shutting up of the bowels of his compassion from the poor, as would, according to the Apostolic rule, render the indwelling of the love of God in him a problem of very difficult solution.

The true secret of political economy, on a Christian basis, is not to war against the poor man's natural increase, but against his poverty : not to calculate on how much, or how little rather, he may be kept from perishing with hunger, but by what means he may attain to a hope of elevation above the level of pauperism. But a man of any discernment, entering on this enquiry, soon perceives, that the great bar to such improvement resides in the enormous capital acquired by the minority, which

naturally presses on the majority, through all its grades, forcing the smaller capitalist downward, despite of all his efforts to rise ; and bearing with a perpetually increasing weight on every rank beneath him, until the very poor are trodden down as the mire of the streets. Again, he believes that such overgrown capital tends to augment the political and commercial greatness of the country, far beyond any natural results of a more equalized distribution of property ; and he shrinks from following up a scheme, one obvious effect of which would be to lower that greatness in which he prides himself. But this is a fallacy, inasmuch as it flatly contradicts the word of truth, which declares it is "righteousness" that "exalteth a nation." God has said it : man doubts, and virtually denies it : he has found out another way of exalting his nation, necessarily involving a fearful amount of injustice and oppression—the worst of unrighteousness—and that way he will pursue. He will be wiser than God : can he hope to prosper ?




CHAPTER XI.

EDUCATION.

THE late Earl of Leicester was, even proverbially, a kind, liberal landlord; exceedingly solicitous that his fine agricultural property in Norfolk should boast a race of labouring tenants conspicuous for every comfort and advantage consistent with their position in society that could be conferred on them. 'Some of the cottages of the Earl of Leicester, at Holkham,' say the Poor-law Commissioners, 'are, perhaps, the most substantial and comfortable which are to be seen in any part of England; and if all the English peasantry could be lodged in similar ones, it would be the realization of an Utopia.' They are of brick, roofed with tiles: each has a front room, seventeen feet by twelve in width, and

seven to seven and a half in height ; a back kitchen and pantry ; three good-sized bedrooms ; and at a convenient distance behind, every cottage has a wash-house, a dirt-bin, a privy, and a pig-cot ; with about twenty rods of garden-ground ; the rent, altogether, being £3. 3s. a year. The water is good, the drainage excellent, and no instance of fever or epidemic has been known to occur among the families inhabiting them. Another benevolent individual, the Rev. E. Benyon, has done as much in every respect for his poor tenantry at Culford ; excepting that the apartments are not quite so large, and there are only two bedrooms in each. In point of healthiness they are equally favoured.

But now follows a painful fact ; one of such vital importance, that to overlook it would be to regard man as a mere animal, and to concert plans for his advantage on no higher principle than should influence us in the fit construction of a stable or a dog-kennel. The tenants of these admirable cottages, the well-employed, well-paid, healthy peasantry thus beneficially cared for, are, on the showing of those best qualified to judge and report, DIS-



CONTENTED and DEMORALIZED. The temptations to which they are exposed, keep pace with their increased advantages, and though the labourers of Holkham are a fine race of men, their moral condition is not superior to that of the inmates of a filthy hovel. At Culford, a public-house being near at hand, and the men having plenty of wages to spend, the consequence is deplorable; and the conclusion at which Mr. Twissleton arrives, after a minute investigation, is irrefragable; 'No external and mechanical benefits can supply the place of good moral training; and I should say, as a corollary, that, *at the same time that you build first-rate cottages, you should establish first-rate schools.*'


We happen, within our own experience, to know a case in which a wealthy and benevolent man, on coming into possession of considerable landed property, with a tenantry of labouring poor, wretchedly lodged, and suffering all the concomitants of poverty already referred to, commenced his rule by building a complete village in the heart of his estate, consisting of cottages, well-planned, supplied with every advantage; each having its little

garden, and all being in perfect order when the tenants were transferred to them from their miserable hovels. To ensure better habits among them, the landlord introduced a clause into their agreement, making the continued possession of these dwellings conditional: the occupier was to keep his cottage properly whitewashed and in good external repair; the garden neat, and the premises free from accumulations of filth, or other unwholesome matter. The rent was low, wages high, leisure abundant, while frequent personal inspection on the part of the benevolent landlord and his family completed the encouragement to do well. But, after a little while, when the novelty had worn off, attention to these particulars relaxed, and at the end of a year scarcely one of his pretty cottages would stand even a cursory outside review, to say nothing of the scene within; while sobriety was almost as scarce as neatness. To rouse the rest, he put into effect the saving clause against a few of the most incorrigible offenders, and ejected them; but this only produced a great clamour on the score of oppression, among the remainder, who, moreover,


showed no signs of amendment. He saw at once the origin of the evil, and while still using, so far as he could, influence, authority, and example, to enforce right conduct, he relied little on either apart from higher means. He opened an adult evening-school, together with a day-school for the children, in both of which scriptural instruction was given as the basis of all moral good ; and upon it a corresponding superstructure was raised. Many discouragements, from the obduracy of some, the heedlessness of others, and the lurking discontent of almost all, beset his path—but he persevered ; and though it always was and always must be a struggle of no common severity to be steadfast, unmoveable, in the work of doing good to those who seldom rightly understand their own real interests, still the experience of twenty years showed how beneficial a change might be wrought on a population who saw that, while their own bodily comforts were duly attended to, their children were brought up to walk in a better path than they had early entered upon : and the means of intellectual and spiritual profit were freely offered to themselves.

In all plans for improving the condition of the poor, this is an indispensable ingredient. Education, scriptural education, is not less needful to the mind than food and clothing to the body. Without it, you do but adorn a corpse, while the natural corruption that all your decorations cannot arrest in its progress, is actively at work, to render the object of your bootless cares loathsome even to yourself. You whiten a sepulchre ; soon to be defaced, and rendered dangerous to all who approach it, by the putrescent exhalations from within. But then, the building of a handsome row of cottages, draining the land around them, and supplying all needful conveniences, may be accomplished, through an honest, intelligent agent, by a check on your banker ; whereas the cultivation of an intellectual waste,—a moral soil, not simply lying fallow to your hand, but filled with stones, overrun with prolific, self-sowing weeds, and in every way repugnant to improvement, is a work of such difficulty, time, and expenditure of patience (of which few among us possess any great capital) that you shrink from the undertaking. You point to the failure of experiments on so princely a

scale as that of the munificent Coke of Holkham, and say, 'If he could not render his tenants sober, industrious, thankful, or even decently moral and contented, what can I expect to do? You point out certain local and physical causes, as the root of those evils that debase, demoralize, and destroy our labouring population; you call on me to remove them; and then present me with sufficient evidence that the same, or an equally formidable class of evils, will be brought on themselves, by the people so benefited, through sheer perverseness, and obstinate self-destruction.' We admit the general truth of this: but remember we are pleading especially for those for whom, alas! nature itself too often pleads in vain in the hearts of their parents. As matters now stand, abject poverty, and the inevitable results of habitual indecency, form a barrier between the children of the poor and any good we may desire to see conferred on them. Better the condition of the adults, you so far improve that of the children too; but deeply-rooted habits on the one hand, and on the other increased means of gratification, will keep alive, yea in full activity, the bad principle of the




former class, exposing their offspring to as much vicious contamination as before. In this we must act as wise physicians, who, seeing a disease making havoc in a family, and fearing it may have gone too far for counteraction among the confirmed cases, apply with double diligence all means of prevention on behalf of those who are daily exposed to, but not yet actually seized by, the perilous infection. Not that we would abandon, as past reclamation, the most hardened transgressor under heaven. No ; to each and to all we would proclaim, " Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, for He will have mercy upon him ; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon ;" but then the very important and abundantly-promising duty, to " train up a child in the way he should go "— to the non-performance of which on the part of others our demoralized adults mainly owe their depraved condition—that duty claims our diligent care ; and we do say, that any pains or cost bestowed on accomplishing it, any annoyances from present opposition, or prospective disappointment,




will rather stimulate than dishearten a Christian, who knows that the Apostle spoke by the inspiration of God when he said, "Let us not be weary in well-doing ; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Voluntary contributions for the establishment and support of schools, are excellent things, and in many instances have wrought wonderful changes ; but they are in their nature subject to such fluctuations, that none can calculate upon them as a secure fund. The best of people are liable to act impulsively rather than from deep and settled conviction : novelty,—a new channel for their bounty, presented with all the fascinations of eloquent appeal, is apt to divert the stream from its wonted course ; and just in proportion as claimants for the blessing of education throng an opened door, is the closing of that door endangered ; not, perhaps, from any flagging of the fire of zeal in original supporters, but from their having to satisfy other demands. The fact is notorious, that wherever a school is opened for the children of the poor, they flock to it in numbers surpassing the most enlarged calculation of its projectors ; and



though often irregular in their attendance, a falling-off of scholars is as rare an occurrence as the falling-off of funds is unhappily common. *Pro tempore*, every one who loves his country ought to support such schools as are already in operation, or may be set on foot within his reach ; but the grand object must be to obtain from the legislature a far more extensive and efficient system of national education than has ever yet been proposed. The call for it is urgent, the necessity imperative, the omission must be ruinous. We want for the rising generation of England, not the power to read obscene books, and to pen seditious placards, but instruction in the Word of God—those Holy Scriptures which are able to make them wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus ; the divine precepts of which they may be the means of bringing into the cottages of their poor, ignorant parents ; and shedding around their desolate walls a light that not only illumines the dark mind, but also guides the wandering feet into the way of peace.

Individual character has vast power in deciding the temporal lot of a whole household.




Where the good principle is wanting, we have seen how insufficient are the most enlarged efforts to raise the moral standard of a population ; and many cases might be brought forward where the right-minded occupier of a mud hovel invests even it and its starving inmates with respectability. The commissioner already quoted says, after exhibiting instances of the wretchedness consequent on improvidence and sloth ; “ On the other hand, some of the dwellings of paupers with small allowances are exquisitely clean and neat. ‘ Sir,’ said a pauper of this class to me, while I was praising her for the neatness of her cottage, ‘ if I have not a morsel of bread to eat, as long as I can move about I will keep my house sweet and clean.’ ” To implant and foster even such a feeling as this in the mind of a poor girl, destined probably to tread the same path of privation, who would grudge the cost of a little schooling ? The woman, her husband, her children, the whole neighbourhood are advantaged by it. Cleanliness is a great promoter of cheerfulness ; external neatness and order have a charm for man, and many a man do they keep from the beer-shop ; the children

are sure at least to be more healthful than those who wallow in dirt ; and, besides the example, which is often powerful for good, one dwelling preserved from infectious tendencies is, to say the very least of it, an unit subtracted from the amount of public evils.


But we would not speak of our poorer brethren as though they were merely the beings of a day. They have souls, and if they know not their value, it is the more incumbent on us who do, to instruct them. The vice that now renders them dangerous members of the community, will, if persisted in, sink them to everlasting ruin ; and what are the miseries of this mortal span, even when heaped in the most appalling accumulation, compared with the torments of the damned ? We learn from His own word that “ The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,” and what do the wretched beings know of the terrors of that wrath, who never utter or hear His holy name, but in an imprecation or a jest ? This ignorance prevails to an extent scarcely con-

ceivable, and it is only by means of schools that we can let in a little of the light of truth upon the children, and through them probably on their parents also, in the present defective state of religious instruction ;—the unavoidable consequence of increased population in districts where the means of grace provided for comparatively a very few have not proportionably increased. This last forms a subject for separate consideration ; but in speaking of schools we cannot overlook the imperative call arising from such deficiency of clerical superintendence. No man who has read human nature even by its own unsteady light, will say that he has found it inclined to seek after God, to inquire the way of truth, and walk in the paths of righteousness. The very reverse is manifested all the world over ; but were it even so, what means have our distressed population of attaining such knowledge ? Church accommodation there is not, if all were disposed to avail themselves of it : Bibles, if they grew in the hedges, would be useless to the illiterate, unacquainted with the art of reading ; and equally so to those who, having obtained some little knowledge, have been supplied by




the industrious emissaries of evil, the agents of socialism and sedition, with antidotes to that sacred volume, cautions against being led by its precepts, and bold assertions that the holy book itself is a forgery, a deception.


The plain fact, as regards the want of education among the children of those classes who have not means of supplying them with it, is as follows. There are, at the most moderate computation, somewhat more than seven hundred and fifty thousand of these children wholly destitute of instruction, even such as the very humblest parish or dame-school might afford : seven hundred and fifty thousand immortal beings growing up in this Christian country, without an effort made to rescue them from the power of that vice which so fearfully prevails among their older associates : seven hundred and fifty thousand baptized infidels, whose ignorant and depraved connexions have, as a means of getting their births registered, promised on their behalf that they should renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, and continue Christ's faithful servants and soldiers to their lives' end ; but to whom probably the ministers who thus admitted them within the



pale of the visible Church, have not the means of conveying that instruction without which they will not even be made aware of the nature of their solemn engagement, or brought to know the name of HIM in whose service they are enlisted. The efforts made by godly ministers both in the establishment and out of it, to feed the lambs scattered over the world's poisoned pastures, the difficulties which they overcome, the good which they effect, the blessing which they secure, are little understood, and less appreciated ; but when they have accomplished all that zeal and devotion in a good cause can possibly achieve, at the greatest sacrifice of self, and under the most favourable circumstances ; when the benevolence of private individuals has been drawn forth to its utmost limit, not only money but personal labour also being contributed to aid the good work ; when the State has come forward with its measure of help, and done all that it deemed fitting to do in furtherance of the cause ; we are compelled to stretch forth the appealing hand, and, pointing to the seven hundred and fifty thousand wholly unprovided for, to ask, Is it the will of your heavenly Father that these little ones should perish ?



The gross number of children in the ranks of life referred to, throughout England and Wales, is one million six hundred thousand : of these it is found that 844,626, between the ages of three and thirteen, are receiving daily instruction in some form or other ; so that the actual amount of the untaught mass is 755,374 ; but we prefer coming short of the mark, to the possible appearance of going beyond it. Let us, however, look a little more narrowly into the degree and quality of information acquired by those in schools, and we shall find a lamentable deficiency in both. The children, on an average, remain but for a year and half in any school, except in rural districts, where they continue perhaps two or three years ; and this short interval, very rarely marked by any regularity of attendance, is all they enjoy for the purposes of good instruction ; while to neutralize its effects, they are surrounded by sights and sounds of evil, from the first dawn of reason to the commencement of this work, and during its necessary pauses ; and, in a far greater measure, when the short term of schooling has expired, and they are prematurely thrown into the



crowded field of labour, among a demoralized adult population.

This transient duration of the benefit partaken of, renders it doubly important that the quality of instruction given should be of the best ; the most adapted to their present disadvantages, and future temptations. Among those who receive the Bible as a revelation from God, there can be no question as to its being the appointed groundwork of all teaching, the rule and standard alike of faith and of practice, because the Lord himself therein declares so. Not only is it plainly announced, that “ The fear of the Lord is the BEGINNING of wisdom : ” * but also that the Holy Scriptures “ are able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus : ” † and again, that this “ faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God ; ” ‡ and “ All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. ” § These passages, if they were not, as they are, abundantly illustrated and confirmed by hun-


* Prov. ix. 10.

† 2 Tim. iii. 15.


‡ Rom. x. 17.

§ 2 Tim. iii. 6.

dreds of similar import, would suffice to establish the point, on authority which cannot be questioned by man ; and accordingly we find the English nation unanimously rejecting every system where this one grand principle is not expressly admitted, and fairly carried out : but an opposite error very extensively prevails among those who, knowing that the entrance of God's word giveth light, imagine that by storing a child's memory with abundance of Scripture texts, and making him verbally acquainted with the main doctrines and principal historical outlines of the Bible, they are effecting that entrance of the divine word to enlighten a dark mind. Whereas, to be instructed in it, as Timothy in childhood was, our youthful scholars require a course of patient, individual teaching, an appeal to the understanding rather than the memory, and to the heart before either ; such as, on the present limited and imperfect plan of national education, it is vain to expect. We have known instances, and such of our readers as are well acquainted with the interior economy of the thing, may doubtless have known similar cases, where the master of a national or



parochial school, while perfectly intelligent, well-informed, and in all matters pertaining to the ordinary school routine, not only unexceptionable, but remarkably adapted to his office, has been in politics a demagogue ; in morals a companion of, if not a partaker with, idle profligates ; and in religion never known to open in his own dwelling the book which he professes to teach and to recommend at school. Even if of a far higher cast of private character, still he is often, indeed generally, little qualified to do more than administer the external, mechanical branch of training to which his own education was probably confined ; and if he does indeed look upon each individual under his charge as a being whose course through time and eternity will probably be shaped according to the use made of the brief period they may pass together, still his acquirements may come so far short of his sense of responsibility and desire to be useful, as to render the latter nugatory. One of the first steps towards an efficient education for the poor, is to send their schoolmasters to school. This good work has commenced on a small scale ; still we want a great in-




crease of helpers answerable to the immense demand.

But what, it may be asked, is your drift ? are you bent on providing a supply of commercial and classical academies for the pauper children of the land ? No : we only wish to give them a religious and useful course of instruction suited to their station in life, with the same regard to fitness in the choice of a teacher, as you would exercise in the selection of a gardener. You would not commit your flower-beds into the hands of a man who could not discern between clay and gravel and sandy loam ; who would indiscriminately apply hot compost and cold ; who would leave the tender plant to struggle for its existence under cold blasts and burning rays, and undertake to graft or to bud without knowing the nature either of stock or shoot. It is not the mere random exhibition of Scripture phraseology to the eye, nor the indiscriminate heaping of scriptural facts and precepts upon the memory, that will accomplish what we require : it is a careful selection, adaptation, and incorporation ; a seasonable planting and judicious watering, in dependence on the in-

crease that must come from God—a skilful grafting of well-selected shoots, each on the stock best suited to receive it; with an after care that the junction be not rudely broken. To drop the metaphor, we would have individual character studied, and each dealt with according to the result of that study; so that the less heedful scholar might engage a double share of the teacher's attention, and learning by rote be counted for no more than it is worth. A little close questioning, somewhat out of the common routine, in almost any class of almost any school, would serve to illustrate our meaning; which is no less applicable to the secular than to the spiritual branch of tuition. In every case, it should be borne in mind that words are useless except as they represent things or embody ideas; and that he who, with the readiest loquacity, runs through a set of phrases, or answers questions from mere memory, is often the lad to forget the soonest what he has learned with little toil, and to banish the subject-matter from his thoughts whenever he leaves the bench where he conned the lesson.

Education is a mere nominal good, not

unfrequently a positive evil, if the head alone be instructed, the mind and affections left as they were. Many an apt schoolboy may distinguish himself above his fellows, as Toby the learned pig undoubtedly did among his ; but Toby with all his acquirements would, if freed from restraint, have returned to his wallowing in the mire, with as much zest as any of his brethren whose accomplishments never extended beyond routing in the gutter ; and so alas ! do too many of our most promising pupils, after delighting their instructors by a quick eye and retentive memory, go forth to plunge into the lowest debauchery of their domestic associates, losing all that they had gained, simply because, in the enlarged sense of the word, they never understood or valued it. The change of heart, the true reformation of life, is God's work alone ; and man's part in it is wholly subordinate, dependent on an influence which he can only ask, having no power to command it ; but a comparatively high tone of moral feeling, a sense of propriety, a love of decency, and that self-respect which always tends to admitted respectability, may and will result from judicious culture even in very un-



promising soils. We would gladly have every man a devoted Christian, and do all in our power to promote so happy a consummation ; but that being confessedly beyond our ability to accomplish, let us at least so instruct the boy that we may expect the man to be a loyal subject, a peaceable neighbour, and a decent industrious member of society, disposed to seek higher gratifications than those in which the very brutes find their chief happiness. There is nothing Utopian in this : a million of public money is often applied to uses that will not bear a moment's comparison with what it would effect by supplying the existing deficiency of school-houses ; and a yearly grant of a hundred thousand pounds, what statesman would grudge, if assured that thereby

A virtuous populace should rise the while
To stand, a wall of fire, around their much-loved isle.

There is no middle course : things cannot remain as they are. The population is increasing, pauperism is increasing, vice and turbulence are increasing. You have one hold on the poor man, and that a powerful one : be in very deed, the benefactors of his children,—


let him see you really care for them ; let him trace in their improved feeling and amended manners the kind guidance of your hand, and hear from their lips the valuable truths from which he has long been excluded—self-excluded perhaps, but still an alien from the true commonwealth. If you neglect this duty, these children will prove formidable auxiliaries to his worst designs ; for it is well known they are among the most expert incendiaries, and most pitiless butchers, when once the tide of anarchy sets in. Enlist them on God's side, and you will find them, in every sense, a shield ; not only will individual gratitude be ready to interpose between you and danger, but even that danger may itself be averted by the gracious interposition of Him who has said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

CHAPTER XII.

SUBDIVISION OF PARISHES.

NEXT after Education comes a point of pressing urgency ; that of parochial subdivision. Under the New Poor Law we find the responsible officers, among their gigantic powers, have that of uniting, dividing, and remodelling districts to any extent, for the furtherance of their operations in the work-house department ; because the increased population, and yet more, the increased pauperism of the country rendered some fresh arrangements absolutely necessary. All we want is the recognition of the same principle in spiritual matters, and action equally prompt as has been that of the commissioners. When we look at the duties of a clergyman, according to the solemn injunction laid on

him, and pledge given by him at his ordination, we find they include, not only the public ministrations of the Church, which must be statedly performed, and the Gospel diligently preached to the congregation, but also 'to teach and premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world.' 'With all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines, contrary to God's word: and to use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole.' 'To be diligent in prayers and in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help in the knowledge of the same.' It never could be in the contemplation of those who framed this compendium of necessary duties, making it incumbent on the minister to see that every person under his charge is duly attended to in spiritual things, to burden any one man with a parish of such geographical or numerical extent as to render the performance of his vow a manifest impossibility. Yet that it is so no one thinks of denying, and nothing but



the subdivision of which we speak will remedy this serious evil. It is a mere mock to enrol the people in parishes, and place them nominally under the pastoral charge of a man who cannot, by any effort of mortal zeal and perseverance, rightly fulfil his duty towards one tenth or one twentieth part of them ; either publicly in the Church, which, if they all attended in rotation so as to fill it every Sunday, would only admit each person to take his turn perhaps once in several months ; or privately, where to visit the sick, to instruct the ignorant, and to admonish the refractory with anything like equal care, would hardly leave him leisure for eating and sleeping. No clergyman ought, under any circumstances, to be burdened with more than three thousand people ; seldom should his charge exceed two thousand.

The benefits resulting from such a change in parochial arrangements are so obvious, that they need not be enlarged upon. The present system is the parent of half the misery that we have been describing : for in many places the only effective control exercised over a population is that of the minister ; and

he alone is able to represent their actual sufferings in quarters whence relief may come ; he alone has authority to interfere in matters whereof the law of man takes no direct cognizance, but where the expounder of God's law cannot be silent. The clergyman is the natural guardian and adviser of the poor ; his wife and family their natural friends and comforters, in those thousand little perplexities and sorrows that beset their thorny path, and where a few discreet words of kind sympathy and judicious counsel might often avert acts, the fruits of reckless despair, which would call for punishment at the hands of justice ; a punishment more frequently hardening than reclaiming the transgressor. Were his allotted task in some measure proportioned to his strength, how much would the devoted clergyman's happiness, together with his usefulness, be increased : and what an effectual moral force would be brought to bear, if the poor of the land were severally dealt with as rational immortal beings ; each having to give account of himself at the bar of the omniscient Judge ; each liable to the wages of sin, and each invited to seek the gift of God, even eternal life !


As the matter now stands, the poor man knows that a very large majority of the people for whom the church-bells chime out their invitation must stay away, and he resolves to be of the number ; leaving it to those who are better dressed, or better taught, or have more spare time than himself, to go. There is little fear of his miserable home being visited, and his non-attendance on the means of grace reproved. The clergyman's time is engrossed by those who have invited his visits, or to whom he knows they will be acceptable ; he is not likely to neglect such for the doubtful reception that an irreligious stranger might give. Indeed, where the work is so far beyond one man's ability, it seems a duty to provide first for the household of faith : and no time is left for following the straying sheep. Thus the parent's misconduct dooms the children to ignorance of God ; and early vice soon hardens the heart against any appeal that may cross the path of the sinner. Such things exist, in many a place where the appointed minister is really devoted to his work ; he is shunned, and his message of mercy never reaches their ears. Surely this is a matter requir-

ing prompt attention : “ Evil communications corrupt good manners ; ” such characters as we have described always seek to bring others to their own level ; and unhappily they have a very large mass around them to infect with the poisonous leaven. The hours that ought to be spent in public worship are too often passed where sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion are concocted : they who will not join in the praises of God, become familiar with the song of the drunkard ; and the result is too frequently an active hatred of everything good : “ The wicked seeth the righteous, and seeketh occasion to slay him.”

We do not say that the multiplication of churches, and increase of working clergymen would inevitably change the aspect of society in its worst features : matters have gone on so long in their present ruinous train, that something more is required than the mere opportunity of obtaining a knowledge for which the vitiated multitudes have no relish ; nor may we under any circumstances exalt the means of grace into the office and efficacy of grace itself. They are means appointed of God, and as such they may be used with a good


hope that a blessing will follow ; and certainly without their adoption we have no warrant to look for any thing but an aggravated curse.

The parishes being subdivided and set out into districts, or rather new parishes, in the next place each must have its church. This is the case already in many places, through the recent progress of Church-extension, zealously promoted by some of our bishops, and wealthier laymen. But to meet the actual necessity, a fund must be provided, from which every new district so formed, and having no church of its own, shall be empowered to draw half the cost of erecting one, whenever the other half is provided by the inhabitants. Plain, substantial buildings, free from architectural fripperies, and suited for the accommodation of a humble flock, would not be found very expensive, nor unattainable in the poorest neighbourhoods ; while the advantages attending their establishment, and the proclamation of the pure Gospel, as enforced by our scriptural Church on all who undertake to minister in her communion, must bring forth some fruit : for thus saith the Lord : “ As the rain cometh down, and the



snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater ; so shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth : it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it."


Another fund will be necessary, out of which to furnish a suitable provision for the minister of each new Church ; and less than £100 a year should not even be contemplated as a beginning in every case. Of this a portion might be required to be guaranteed by the people themselves. The public encouragement given would act as a stimulus to the liberality of individuals : no thinking man could question the desirableness of such a change in his own vicinity : no benevolent man but must rejoice in the prospect of seeing a kind and careful superintendence exercised over a long destitute and neglected population ; nor could any pious Christian do otherwise than labour zealously to promote the means for bringing back a multitude of wanderers into the fold of the good Shepherd.



Upon the better order too, it would operate most favourably : the well-conducted members of society would find their respectability and the weight of their example increased in the sight of their dissolute neighbours : the influence of the gentry would be drawn out, their interest excited, and their efforts concentrated in their immediate neighbourhood ; and instead of closing up the sluices of beneficence through utter uncertainty as to where the stream should be directed,—fearing to encourage idleness and imposture by indiscriminate bounty, and doubtful as to the comparative merits of rival plans,—they would have a field opened under their immediate inspection, with every facility of inquiry into private characters, and the means of examining into, of assisting to direct the details of such schools, and other benevolent parochial institutions, as will always spring up where a good minister is put in charge of a flock. The benefit to be conferred by well-regulated district-visiting, and the relief of the sick, where a little temporary help to one member may avert the necessity of sending a whole family to the work-house, together with the gratitude and respectful re-

gard that such kindness from their superiors will excite in the bosoms of the poor :—these and many similar results would overpay many-fold the pecuniary sacrifice made to achieve so desirable an object—so beneficial to man, so acceptable to God.

There is an advantage attached to the service of the Church of England which can never be too highly estimated. No man can answer for another, or for himself, that he will always preach sound doctrine, and rightly divide the word of truth ; but whosoever attends the worship of God in one of our churches, will hear the glad tidings of salvation in the very words in which it was conveyed to man. The large proportion of Scripture interwoven in the daily form of prayer, is the most conspicuous excellence of the Established Church. The lessons, the psalms, epistle, and gospel, are so many incitements to the hearer to study the Bible at home : he becomes familiarized with the language, the imagery of holy writ ; and surely if David could say, “ the entrance of thy word giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple,” we are authorized to believe, and experience verifies it, that the fre-




quent hearing of what our beloved Church so liberally supplies to her worshipping members, will shed a light on the poor man's mind, give understanding where all before was dark and cloudy, and if it do not lead to the actual conversion of his soul to God, it will yet impart a decency to his outward deportment, and so far check him in his intercourse with others, as to confer a very decided negative advantage on many, whom his shameless wickedness would otherwise encourage in setting at nought all restraint on their own evil propensities. The influence of example is powerful, especially when one who has heretofore followed the paths of sin, turns from his evil ways, and seeks to do right ; and when such change is obviously connected with, or dated from attendance on the means of grace.

The Church is established by law, and endowed by the State, in order that the people of the land may be trained up in the ways of righteousness, of loyalty, sobriety, and peace. Unless the Church be maintained in a state of efficiency for the work, what is it but a solemn mockery of God and man ? We stigmatize as schismatics men who, moved at the spiritual

destitution of so many millions, and aware that by no possible effort on the part of the established clergy can they be brought under the teaching of the Gospel, separate from the Church, and become preachers without episcopal ordination ; but surely the root of such alleged schism is to be sought in the utter inadequacy of which we complain ; and the first step towards unity must necessarily be to afford sufficient room, and sufficient instruction, for the multitudes whom we desire to gather into one harmonious congregation of worshippers, according to the rites and formularies of the National Church.

CHAPTER XIII.


PARLIAMENTARY INTERFERENCE.

- MORAL and spiritual improvement on a large scale—on a scale commensurate with the extent of moral perversion and spiritual destitution, must be aimed at, and accomplished too, ere the peril that impends over the nation can be so diminished as to leave us in the peaceful enjoyment of our many privileges. We have endeavoured to prove, however, that evils of a character not to be reached by any mode or measure of mere instruction, must be removed ; simultaneously with, if not even before, such effort for general improvement. “To do justice and love mercy” is what the Lord has pointed out as the acceptable service that he requires ; and by such means only can the load of national responsibility be upborne. The man
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who walks by this rule will not “ make haste to be rich ; ” knowing that he can only do so at the expense of justice to his poor brethren, who must, in some way, suffer loss to augment his gain. He will not oppress the hireling in his wages, because he knows that it is only by the providential dealing of God with him, individually, that he is not himself seeking a scanty subsistence by the labour of his hands ; and seeing that he might have been born to occupy that poor hireling’s place, he will do by him what he feels conscious he would, in his circumstances, have desired others should do to himself. He will not lay house to house, and field to field, that he may be left alone in the land, with a certain number like himself, to the expatriation, or death by accumulated suffering, of many others, for whose maintenance God has assigned it no less than for his own ; and whom he has no right to thrust out that he may seize their lawful portion of the common blessings. Until this principle of action is recognized and fairly carried out, the legislature must supply, by firmly enforcing the laws that exist, and providing new enactments where required, what

the sense of individual responsibility fails to accomplish.

Among those who are interested in upholding the present state of things, we often hear of an infringement of constitutional liberty, if Parliament shall presume to interfere. On the assumption, that in this country a man may do whatsoever he will with his own, some would uphold the English husband's right to condemn his wife to the drudgery of a beast of burden, to probable prostitution, and no less probable death ;—an English father's right to cripple and destroy his infants by selling them to such toil as their tender bodies are utterly incapable of enduring, and to shut out from their minds every ray of knowledge human or divine ;—an English master's right to use his hired servants with a cruelty more withering than that beneath which the African slave formerly groaned ; binding them under the yoke, by exhibiting as the penalty of their refusing to earn a scanty meal at so grinding a price, the certainty of imprisonment in a union workhouse, divorced from every natural tie, unless they prefer starving in the midst of their famishing family. Of such rights as



these, the persons in question are very tenacious ; and extremely sensitive of the least approach to infringement on chartered liberties ; but the legislature has a higher duty to perform, than sanctioning this licentious abuse of our national birthright, freedom.

The House of Commons consists of a certain number of gentlemen, sent thither by their respective constituencies, as being in their judgment best qualified to represent them. Their duty is, to take a comprehensive view of all national matters, and so to apply legal checks, encouragements, and regulations, as shall, in the view of the majority, best conduce to the well-being of the people. They are sworn to the right discharge of these and other well-defined duties ; and the conscientious performance of their oath is the paramount obligation. To maintain the integrity of the constitution, they must trim the balance fairly when any undue preponderance is detected ; and where oppression is found to have sprung up from causes not existing at the earlier period for which our laws were framed, they are bound to meet those new exigencies with restraints equally new. No restricting sta-

tutes that they might agree to pass, could be more repugnant to the spirit of English liberty, than are the abuses that call for those statutes.

In fact, one portion of the community has been encroaching on another, until the latter have not means to live, and scarcely room to die. To mask the true source of the anomalous evil, a cry is raised of 'surplus population,' and this surplus is always, by some fatality, found to exist among the poor. In the peerage, we may find instances of a dozen or fifteen children, and nobody ventures to call them 'surplus'; they are rightly and scripturally regarded as a blessing: but let a labouring man admit the fact of having half as many mouths to satisfy, and they are all 'surplus:' preventive checks, and moral restraints (the latter being the most glaring abuse of language that ever was perpetrated) are talked of; the 'swarm of children' is at once pointed out as the origin of all evil; and the honest poor couple who have obeyed the direct command of God, "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband," are goaded on to misapply another scriptural text, appropriate only to far

different times and circumstances : “ Blessed are the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck ! ” We repeat, that to lighten this merciless pressure of the rich upon the poor, is part of the sworn duty of a British legislator ; the neglect of which gives rise to that false and mischievous cry, that under the present mode of representation, one class alone is represented : that because the poor man has no voice in the polling-booth, therefore his cause has no appointed advocate in the senate. The mischief wrought throughout the community by such assertions, is pretty well known to us all.

De Lolme correctly asserts of the deputies elected by the various constituencies of England, that ‘ when they are once admitted, they represent THE WHOLE BODY OF THE NATION.’ The member returned to serve in Parliament for a county abounding in mines, for example, does indeed in an especial manner stand pledged to guard the rights and maintain the cause of those who, in misery and darkness, toil beneath its surface ; the representative who takes a seat for Lancashire, appears no doubt in the senate under a paramount obli-

gation to plead for the immense majority of its population who labour in the mill and at the loom ; and in like manner, each in the representative assembly may point to some class, as forming the bulk of the people in the place whence he is deputed, who have a two-fold claim on him, originating in their numbers and in their helplessness ; but still each member of the Commons' House of England represents all England's commonalty : he is bound in every vote that he gives to keep in view the national, equally with the individual advantage ; and to favour no body of men, local or otherwise, at the public expence.

But he is bound by an oath ; and in the act of taking that oath he solemnly acknowledges the being, the sovereignty, the omniscience, and the justice of God. He is sworn on the Holy Scriptures, and thereby ratifies his full assent to their inspired character, as the supernatural revelation of God's will to man. This involves a duty even paramount to the former ; for God, the universal King, demands his first allegiance, and the divinely-appointed law which He has miraculously conveyed to man, is that by which all other

laws must be tested, abolished, amended, or framed. If he finds upon the statute-book any enactment opposed to the known will of the Most High, he must labour for its erasure ; if he perceives a system of wrong and robbery in operation for want of some new act, strictly in accordance with the divine legislation, to repress it, he must use his utmost endeavour to supply the defect. We see not at what point of these assertions any christian man, rightly read in the spirit of the British constitution, can meet us with a denial : direct verbal contradiction few would care to give ; but the silent contradiction of an adverse line of conduct, perpetually crossing the path of any one who proclaims that such are the right springs of legislative action, too plainly proves how little is the blessing appropriated which declares, ‘ If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.’

Nevertheless, duty remains unchanged in its character and obligation : and in the hope that some who have hitherto overlooked the subject, may be led to pause upon it as a matter of no small moment to themselves, and the nation at large, we will proceed to point

out some examples of what we desire to enforce. We would not willingly believe concerning any man that he held the future judgment of God so light a thing as to be braved for a little present gain, or other momentary advantage : that he would betray the cause of the poor who have no elective privilege, in deference to the interests of oppressive superiors, who can influence his return to Parliament ; and for what purpose ? just to heap fresh condemnation on his own guilty head, by a comprehensive sort of treason that subverts alike the monarch's throne, the subject's birthright, the nation's peace, and the authority of God's most holy law.

Glancing over the heads of our preceding statement, it appears, that a very large number of the most helpless beings in the community, mere infants, are not only deprived of the blessings of education, and debarred from the common privileges of their age, in healthful exercise, and harmless recreation, essential to their very growth, but are also most cruelly imprisoned and overworked ; and that for such protracted periods as few adult frames and constitutions could long bear up under.

That the grasping cupidity of employers, seconded either by the covetousness or the poverty of parents, has established this disgraceful system beyond the reach of any interposition, save that of legislative enactment; while the preponderance of wealth and political influence has enabled the aggressive party hitherto successfully to resist all attempts at a due regulation of the hours of labour, and other branches of the system, affecting the personal safety of the unhappy sufferers. Ameliorations nominal rather than real have, from time to time, been conceded, few and far between; but generally with some neutralizing clause, which rendered each succeeding concession more inoperative than its predecessor. The grievance is very great, as regards adult labourers; but on the poor children it presses with intolerable severity, calling for such remedial measures as it is quite clear will never be voluntarily adopted by the men whose coffers it fills. The state must legislate for the factories: pity, reason, justice, common prudence all demand it. While wrongs so crying as these remain unredressed, there is little prospect that others, less glaringly cruel, will

be heeded ; and signs are thickening round us, that if man will not yield relief, God will inflict retribution. The public safety is jeopardized by acts that enrich but a small section of the upper classes ; public humanity is outraged that a paltry per centage may be wrung from the aching sinews of half-clad little children ; public responsibility is incurred to an extent not sufficiently understood by those who forget that the deputy sent by them to Parliament is, emphatically, their *representative* ; the vote that he gives is but an aggregate of their votes : and while he obstinately withholds his hand from a good work, they cannot be said to stand neuter in the matter.

The mining population have fared better than their poor neighbours in the mills, so far as legislation has gone. A burst of real English feeling was elicited, when the noble Lord, whose indefatigable labours in the cause of humanity cannot be overrated, laid before the House of Commons the frightful picture of female and infant suffering in those regions of darkness ; and the relief that he prayed was forthwith *promised*,—we would that we could say, *granted*. We need not follow the bill

through its vicissitudes: every one knows how near it was to being strangled in the upper house, and with what maimed proportions it came forth at length, established as law. It has not yet come into operation, however; and already we hear the note of preparation announcing an attempt at repeal. It cannot be that the English Parliament should retrograde on such a path: universal execration would pursue the recreants, branding their names with a reproach never to be wiped off. Still it behoves every man to be at his post; alert, and prepared for a skirmish; and it also behoves them to unloose this heavy burden more extensively than they have yet done. The case of boys, apprenticed too soon by several years, and hopelessly subjected to ignorant, unfeeling men, who may abuse to almost any extent their power over the forlorn children; either shortening their wretched lives, or hardening them into tyrants trained to torture another generation of slaves—this case is one of great urgency; as is also that of the whole body of workers where the proprietor has neglected to drain, ventilate, and guard the pit with due concern for their

safety. It may reasonably be hoped that the avowal on the part of some owners, of a determination to oppose even the rescue of women and babes from the horrors of the coal-pit, will both strengthen and augment the ranks of those who are resolved to protect the defenceless. It proves how completely the lust of gold has taken possession of some men's hearts, to the exclusion of all that is not subordinate to this ruling passion ; and that the resolute voice of law must command, where justice remonstrates and humanity pleads in vain.

Yet again, to make good laws will not suffice ; an efficient machinery must be provided for working them out. If the application of a measure be left in the hands of the very men who most strenuously opposed its adoption, and to whose interests it is, as they conceive, decidedly hostile, it can hardly be doubted that some evasions will follow. A searching inquiry into the various modes by which the main purposes of an act are successfully defeated ; wrongs that it was framed to redress not only unmitigated but multiplied ; and the most atrocious acts of deliberate fraud committed upon the poor labourers, who know

that resistance would be followed by instant dismissal, would lay open a scene, the recital of which, unaccompanied by legal proofs, might be deemed libellous. The truck system, ostensibly renounced, is carried on in full vigour in many places by means of some immediate connexion, or trusty agent, who resorts to practices which the honest tradesman would scorn, and which a prudent one would fear to venture on. Instead of money for wages, a paper is given, containing an order on this truckster for goods to the amount ; which, alike in quantity, quality, and value, are sure to be far below the worst bargain the labourer could make elsewhere ; even if, as is seldom the case, the article itself were what he wished for. Payments of this nature are of a mixed character ; they combine the impudence of a highway-robbery with the meanness of petty larceny : added to which their victim is one who, through sheer poverty, generally escapes all other gangs of depredators. We claim from the legislature a guard over the poor man's hard-earned wages. A starving wretch cannot pilfer a turnip from a green-grocer's stall, but

the law interposes with redress for the loser, and incarceration for the thief : where is the boasted impartiality of this same English law, when a man of property may filch from the labourer's pocket the sixpence he has acquired by lengthened hours of toil, and doom his victim to starvation if he but dare to complain of the theft ?

But, " skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life ;" and compared with some injuries resulting from the same indurating principle of covetousness, this is of small amount. The pits, and other places connected especially with coal and ironworks, are often in a frightful state, through neglect of the most ordinary precautions against casualties that may daily be looked for. A poor fellow, eager to earn a few shillings per week, and perhaps unacquainted with all save his own particular branch of the business, will engage himself, and commence his labour where, as the proprietor very well knows, an experienced eye would detect most imminent peril at every step ; through the absence of, perhaps, a little wood to shore up a dangerous opening, or from some other wretched saving. The


consequence is, the frequent recurrence of calamities attended with loss of life : so frequent indeed, that the survivors scarcely notice the event, beyond ascertaining who is killed ; and in some instances the widows of the slain, with their little ones, have to vacate their dwellings immediately, for the accommodation of the dead man's successor ; and are turned out to starve with as little compunction as the deceased husband and father was sent down to a more violent death.

Commercial and agricultural evils it is not so easy to meet by legislation. Having pointed out some of the fruits that bespeak the existence of a root of bitterness, we would rather suggest to those who meet to deliberate on matters of public interest, how far they may individually work to counteract the progress of what they cannot but deplore. Who can look upon the splendid assemblage of England's aristocracy on the one hand, and on the other her independent gentlemen, convened for the dispatch of public business, without being forcibly struck by the enormous amount of INFLUENCE possessed by them, apart from their senatorial functions ? Who can doubt

that if each among them resolved to exert his portion of that influence, comprising wealth, authority, talent, eloquence, and example ; to stem the tide of demoralization, and to lighten the pressure of distress, and to elevate the national character, just so far as the self-same influence could reach around him, the introduction of so vast a portion of wholesome leaven, in so many quarters, would rapidly work for the transformation of the whole mass ? ‘ What shall we do ? ’ is a question easily asked, but exceedingly difficult to answer, when men look abroad on the complicated texture ; with so much to amend, so much to unravel, so much to add, that they really do not see where or how to begin, nor can conceive where or how they can possibly end : but when each sets out by honestly inquiring ‘ What can *I* do ? ’ confines his regards to the piece within his own reach, and heartily sets about doing his best there, they will gradually become acquainted with the details of what, as a whole, was so hopelessly perplexing, and thus be enabled to meet in a combined effort for the general good. Be it understood, however, that in so engaging to

serve their country, all must proceed according to one chart, guided by the true pole-star, the Word of God. The man who refuses to recognize this rule, may beat about in his own narrow channel, he will effect nothing towards the grand object ; he will never reach the place of rendezvous, and his isolated, unblest efforts will end in disappointment. He may be a very Solon, but England is not Sparta : where God has shed the beams of the Gospel, He will have men, public or private, to walk in the brightness of those beams. Ebony, under a high polish, may indeed shine ; but oh, how unlike to the living lustre of the diamond, where light meets light, and flashes forth the radiating brilliancy that nothing can quench, is the cold, dull reflection of the day-beam on an opaque body, the very beauty of which consists in the increased visibility of its own darkness ! The first step to be taken by any man who desires to show mercy to his suffering fellow-men, is to embrace the mercy of Christ, freely offered to himself ; and then to proceed upon the heaven-taught principle already referred to, “ If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” Thus guided,

our representatives will assemble prepared to deliberate, not how they shall thwart each other's proposed measures for the furtherance of party ends, but how they may lighten the pressure of public suffering, and avert the increase of public danger. They will find means to check the aggressive progress of overbearing capital, and to throw a protective shield over humble labour; they will look with pity on the fallen state of their native peasant, and devise plans to raise him again towards his former standing in the scale of comfort and respectability: some provision will be made for the allotment to the poor man of a little plot of ground, from which he may extract a moiety of subsistence for his family; the grinding oppression of wealthy task-masters, on whose scanty remuneration alone he now depends for a morsel of bread, will find a limit over which it cannot pass; and the desperate speculations of commercial gamblers will be somewhat impeded in their ruinous effects on thousands of families, wholly innocent of any participation in acts of which they are the victims. The universal cry for protection will not ascend in vain from the



myriads who, if they be the lowest, are also the nearest to the foundation of the social structure ; and whose violent uprising from an oppressed recumbency would prostrate the whole mass in undistinguished ruin.

That the Poor-laws form a most difficult branch of legislative inquiry, is freely admitted ; but it is one also of the most imperative necessity. We have entered on this point in a previous chapter, and have only to repeat that the plan of delegating all authority, and thereby, in appearance, shifting all responsibility, to a triumvirate of the very best and very wisest of mortal men, is equally impolitic as unjust ; and both in a high degree. It may be a short cut to the desired point, but it is one of exceeding peril to all parties. A large remuneration will tempt many to overrate their own powers, mental and corporeal ; their judgment, temper, firmness, benevolence, may be truly admirable, and yet fall immeasurably short of the immense requirement. They may undertake the office with the fullest determination to discharge its duties as in the sight of God, and never to spare themselves, to regard their own ease, or to

taste the sweets of luxury, brought within their grasp by the liberal emolument assigned to them ; they may appoint assistants in the same spirit, and those assistants may be men like-minded, most zealously devoted to their work ; and judging by some of their published reports, we conscientiously believe them to be so ; these, again, may make choice of such as they deem the most unexceptionable persons to fill the numerous local situations, and to work out in its details the system prescribed ; still the whole proceeds on an assumption not borne out by any reasonable conclusions drawn from facts or experience, both of which bear ample testimony to the universal applicability of God's legislation, and the futility of any fancied improvements upon His all-wise ordinances ; and it places in the hands of a few fallible men, invested with power more unlimited than the British monarch enjoys, the destinies of a class of whom God has declared that they are His especial care ; who become a national burden because they are neglected ; who in proportion to their burdensome increase are murmured against, and oppressed ; and finally,

as we shall surely ere long experience, through the guilt incurred by their oppressors, become a national curse. Surely these are things that it behoves our senators maturely to consider ; —surely it must be their duty to deal in some more careful manner, than by a reference of the whole mass of the poor to a commission of three persons,—with a class so helpless, and so important.

Again, as respects education : public money is a sacred charge in the hands of those who hold it, and they are inexcuseable if to the best of their judgment, it is not so expended as most to promote the public advantage. Now, God requires of every parent that he should train up his children in the way they should go ; and without such training we have no warrant for expecting any blessing, temporal or eternal. Without it, ignorant children grow up into ungodly men, and depraved women ; who become the means of misleading not only their own offspring, but many others into the ways of transgression ; which are now peculiarly the ways of rebellion against man's authority, as delegated by the King of kings. It appears that a multitude of English parents

are in this position, themselves ignorant and evil, wholly incapable of instructing their children, and not caring to make any sacrifice to acquire for them advantages of which they do not know the value; while a still greater number are utterly unable, through extreme poverty, to do what they most gladly would see done for their offspring. It is generally conceded that education of some sort must be granted to the rising generation, even of the poorest among us, but some doubt the necessity of further parliamentary interference; while others consider that demands of more pressing urgency exist in other quarters, on the limited revenue of the country. It does not seem to occur to the majority of legislators that "the blessing of the Lord maketh rich;" and that to a nation the word of promise is as sure as to an individual, "He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and look, what he layeth out it shall be paid him again:" But apart from this pledge of repayment (and all such loans to the Almighty One bear an enormous interest) a much greater amount of expenditure is required to overawe by military and other co-

ercive means, a populace yearly increasing in numbers, in discontent, and seditious tendencies, than would suffice to educate in Christian knowledge and Christian precept, every poor child in the land.

Let each member of the House of Commons, then, view this subject as it bears on the present and future well-being, not only of the country, but in an especial manner of that section of it which he has been chosen to represent; let him call to mind the wretchedness, the viciousness, the struggling spirit of insubordination that he has witnessed, or knows to exist, in some classes located among his own constituency; and present to himself the happy results of an altered feeling, improved habits, and sound, settled principles in that quarter. He will surely feel, that to promote so desirable a change is part of his pledged duty to those who have given him their suffrages, and who cannot but be injuriously affected by the prevalence of so much evil around their habitations; even if none of them are to be found among the misguided class. There is little apprehension of the upper house entertaining with distrust such a proposition as should

tend to the improvement of the humblest ranks in life ; since to those who looked no higher, the increased security of hereditary possessions would furnish a prevailing argument. We have already stated the gross number of children for whom no educational means are provided, and have pleaded, to the best of our ability, their cause ; we have shewn some of the principal hindrances to their improvement of such means as may be placed within their reach ; and we would earnestly impress upon every member of Parliament who accedes to the general truth of our remarks, the obligation that lies on him openly to declare his convictions, and cheerfully to engage in an answerable line of conduct.

There is yet another subject, not to be passed over, though confessedly one of intricate and perplexing character ; we mean the currency. That some change is required in our present monetary system, or rather the adoption of a precise system, where none of a definite character now exists, will be conceded by many ; but among them, who shall put his shoulder to the wheel, and apply the first impetus to this gigantic, this inert piece of

mechanism, over which politicians have long and idly mused? We want both words and deeds: we require from some enlightened legislator a statement in detail of his well-digested plans for supplying this serious national *desideratum*; followed up by a series of resolute efforts for bringing it, with such improvements as the combined wisdom of parliament may suggest, into speedy operation. The subject is habitually overlooked by the many; and by the few too generally glanced at as a thing with which they fear to intermeddle, seeing in how many intricacies it is involved. Yet, until this difficulty is fairly grappled with, we cannot calculate on the continuance of any prosperous moment that may for a season relieve the present gloom. Such must, in its very nature, be evanescent; dependent on contingencies ever shifting according to the features of the time; and not only so, but it has been bitterly felt, by recent experience, that such gleamings of prosperity may be as deceitful as transient, and leave behind them a long train of evils, real, abiding, tending to moral and political dissolution.

The government that would deserve well of

the country, by fixing on a firm basis its commercial security and advantage, must begin by taking the currency under its immediate control ; and placing it under such regulations as shall render it independent of the money-making or money-extracting speculations of interested individuals, combined for purposes of personal profit, and using the wealth of the nation as a mere tool to subserve their own unfeeling ends ; by scattering abroad a vast supply of paper-money, giving a sudden impetus to trade and commercial enterprise in every form, glutting the labour-market with hands, and every port throughout the world with goods, until no purchasers can be found for the latter, and the former are flung back, in an overpowering stream of pauperism, to deluge the land. Traced to their origin, how many of the evils which in these pages we deplorably enumerate, would be found rising direct from this one root of misgovernment, or rather of non-government in reference to the currency ! Fluctuations scarcely felt, scarcely recognized by one portion of the community, act with fearful effect on another, and by far the more numerous section ; now

raising them aloft in a proud swell of perhaps unlooked-for prosperity, anon plunging them deep into the lowest gulph of destruction. We cannot concede to any member of the legislature the character of a consistent patriot, who overlooks, or puts by, this vitally important question. Public confidence is placed in him ; it ought not to be abused ; nor can he stand clear of the charge of such abuse, who leaves the national purse at the mercy of every bubble-blowing speculator, desirous of working something for his own advantage out of the defenceless, and perhaps too credulous because generally honourable, community. Habitual neglect has doubtless invested the subject with many embarrassing adjuncts ; but of these the greater part would vanish before a minister resolved on accomplishing the object in view ; and such resolution any minister might be expected to form, on ascertaining that the sense of the House was with him. Like all other important revolutions, this must have a beginning ; probably a small one, the result of individual conviction, carried into operation by individual good faith : it is assuredly a duty so obvious, that any man

embarking in it would have every encouragement to strengthen himself in his God for an acceptable work of justice, benevolence, and the public weal.


When once the amount of our circulating medium is carefully and permanently regulated by the government, a retrospective view of the evils thereby removed will exhibit them in a far more striking light than we can now display them in, mixed up as they are with so many other ills : but let any ten disinterested men sit down, separately, to investigate this subject, as it bears on the commercial and operative classes ; and, dissimilar as their correctionary plans may be, there will be found no dissentient voice among them as to the existence and extent of formidable mischief directly traceable to this source. Suggestions have been thrown out in various quarters,* all of which are open to discussion : we only ask that they should be fairly discussed, and such plans adopted as promise the most effectually to remove this incubus from the bosom of the land.

* We would particularly instance an article in 'The Churchman's Monthly Review,' for September 1842, p. 721.

To object against legislative interference on such points as we have adverted to, is the obvious interest of men who live and thrive on these abuses ; but such is not the voice of the English people ; far less is it the voice of God. To refrain from interfering is to incur an awful amount of responsibility ; to be hereafter inquired into, when each must answer for himself, and where none can deliver his brother. To interfere otherwise than with a set purpose of using their delegated powers for the advantage of those who most need their protection, while carefully guarding the right alike of the highest as of the lowest in the land, would be to accumulate condemnation on the guilty heads of such unfaithful stewards. We will tender a few parting observations on a matter of universal importance, coming especially under the immediate eye of Parliament, before we proceed to another, a more general review of what appears to claim serious attention from various leading classes to which our population look up. This subject is the Revenue.

The last two quarterly returns gave rise to some depressing thoughts : how exactly they

agreed with the ideas and principles expressed in this work is easily shown. Though evidently desiring to hold a middle course, the Prime Minister unquestionably made a move in the last session towards the advocates of Free Trade ; that is, towards those whose declared object it is to give every encouragement to the growth of *capital*, and uphold its tyrannical sway over unprotected *industry*. The deeds of the government were, it is true, less alarming than some of their expressions ; yet we were startled by hearing it for the first time laid down as an axiom that “ we *ought* to buy where we can buy cheapest.” A doctrine which, instead of being obviously and incontrovertibly true, as assumed, is full of falsehood ;—is, indeed, nothing better than Selfishness pretending to be Wisdom. However, the government established it as a maxim, and to a certain extent acted upon it, that cheapness must be the road to prosperity. We were not the only persons who felt misgivings : but hopes were entertained that the new Tariff would do wonders for trade, and that now the revenue must certainly thrive.



In October, the first trial of the new system came on : to the surprise of all, and the consternation of many, several of the chief branches of revenue showed a large decrease. Still this was referred to the transition-state of trade, and the next account, it was hoped, would show a very different result.

January arrived, and the expected account appeared : it proved worse than the former. Not most, but *all* the different sources of revenue exhibited a rapid decline. But for the *special* aid of the income-tax, it seemed as if the revenue would be falling off at the fearful pace of four millions a year. This has been partly accounted for, by one or two pleas put forward ; and we may reasonably hope that the salient principle remaining, will yet, after a while, exhibit itself : but the soundness of the theory enunciated, ' Buy where you can buy cheapest,' becomes more and more questionable : it is not the surest or safest road to prosperity.

For example, America might perhaps agree to grow corn for us at 30s. per quarter, and to an amount sufficient to feed our whole population. Probably it could not be grown

in England at less than 36s. or 40s. even if rents were abolished. Would it, in this case, be wise to follow out the principle, and buy our corn where we could get it cheapest? Say that only 300,000 men are employed in these islands in growing corn: add their families, and you have 1,500,000 persons subsisting by this branch of labour. Where are they to find employment? or is the country to support them all in pauperism, and in a state wholly unproductive? A strange policy this, even if self-interest only be considered, to “buy where we could buy cheapest,” save a few shillings per quarter on wheat, and saddle the country with another million and a half of starving paupers!

Encouragement and countenance being given to this false principle in the House of Commons last year, we cannot but trace to it some of the dangerous movements subsequently witnessed. It has probably given an impetus where none was needed. If all classes of traders and manufacturers should be seized with the madness that already possesses too many among them, and commence a general war upon profits, under the rallying cry of

‘cheapness,’ what but almost universal distress could be the result? Never was there a time when the necessity lay more imperatively upon us to prove all things; to weigh both words and principles; to judge righteous judgment, and cease from man, however able, however estimable, except in so far as his testimony agrees with the divine, the beneficent ordinances of God.

CHAPTER XIV.


ADDRESS TO THE MINISTERS OF THE CROWN.

THE evils of which a dim outline has in the preceding pages been supplied, and the perils that must inevitably arise from such a state of things, concern the whole nation. There is not a class of persons, from the highest to the lowest among us, who may not do something towards the removal of what, if long suffered to exist unchecked, threatens all equally with destruction. The inefficiency of appeals to public attention may often be attributed to the generalizing tone adopted by those who make them. Each perhaps, as he proceeds, acquiesces in the fidelity of the statement, but protests his own utter inability to discern any means of providing a remedy. We have already proceeded on the supposition

that we address men willing to be shown how they, each in his own proper sphere, may co-operate in stemming the tide of mischief : we will now classify our probable readers, and address to each a few of the considerations that may, or at least ought to weigh with himself, as being placed by the providence of God in the position which he holds, and accountable for the right use of opportunities and advantages peculiar to that position. The uses of this individualizing process are important. Rightly applied, it insures a due performance of man's three-fold duty—to God, his neighbour, and himself. In fact, it is the forgetfulness of this first great principle of action, on the part of individuals, that produces so vast an aggregate of mischief and of suffering : and when each man learns so to magnify his own peculiar office, as to believe that a part of the remedy rests with himself, one important step will be gained towards public prosperity.


To those who in the providence of God are called to exercise authority, as responsible ministers of the crown, directors of the national policy, foreign and domestic, who, for

the time being, may be said to wield at will the resources of this mighty empire, we would first address ourselves, and respectfully offer a few suggestions under various heads. You need not to be told that your position is one of high accountability : men will judge you, but their estimate is often incorrect, their opinions erroneous, their decisions unjust. Towards them, you may and must endeavour to have a conscience void of offence ; but you cannot calculate on a right appreciation of your labours and sacrifices. Public applause may crown the most selfish hypocrite ; public odium may pursue the most disinterested patriot. There is another tribunal to which you may be less inclined to appeal, but before which you stand, weighed in its perfect balances, and sure to be dealt with according to its unerring decisions. By whatever steps you attained your present eminence, the hand that placed you on it was the hand of God ; and to Him must you render an account of your mighty stewardship. For “the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.” He has, for the time being, committed a kingdom to your



guidance, and it is required of you that you be found faithful.

You are the advisers of the sovereign. Constituted as is the monarchical government of England, no king, however experienced in worldly things, and versed in state affairs, can act independently of his Cabinet. They must proffer advice, and should their counsel not be acceptable, they must retire. The throne is now occupied by a youthful female, one whose years and sex add double weight to your responsibility. In this, the morning of her days, and the commencement of her reign, she must rest more confidently on your judgment than a man like yourselves might be expected to do. Are you fully awake to the onerous nature of this charge? Do you frequent the council-chamber, and the royal presence, under an abiding conviction that "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God," and on this principle so order your words that the Queen may find her way cleared of all impediments to walk in the right path of government, so that her subjects may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty? Great temptation must




always exist, to flatter the peculiar tastes and prejudices of a monarch, even when they may cross what you know to be for the public weal: do you, on such occasions, duly weigh a conscience void of offence towards God, against the comparative trifles of present place, power, emolument, and courtly favour? Knowing, on infallible authority, that "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is the reproach of any people," do you press for such measures as shall promote the former and discourage the latter, and so place your sovereign in the way of that blessing which ensures prosperity? In a word, do you bear in mind the inevitable event of your standing together with her before the judgment-seat of Christ, there to have your present conduct finally judged by Him to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid? No other principle, no other end will avail. An absolute monarch may use his ministers as the creatures of his will, and accumulate on his own head the consequences of misgovernment: such cannot be the case in England, while she holds her present constitution. You are unable to escape from a full

share of responsibility, as regards the exercise of the royal prerogatives, and your holding this position is a token of mutual agreement in your views and those of your sovereign : of her Majesty's confidence in your wisdom, and of your influence in her councils : while He who seeth not as man seeth, takes note not only of your official acts, but knows the things that come into your mind, every one of them.


You hold the power of appointment to high offices in every branch of the public service. Here, your responsibilities accumulate beyond computation. You place bishops over the Church, judges over the courts of law, commanders over both sea and land forces, governors over our foreign possessions, commissioners and directors over every department of home policy, and officials of some kind wherever the government of the country extends. You appoint ambassadors for the safe-keeping of England's honour and interest at the courts of other monarchs ; consuls to protect and advance her commercial privileges. Your fiat is peace or war throughout the world ; and on your legislative propositions hang the

happiness or misery of millions. By virtue of this authority, you can adequately supply the people with wholesome scriptural instruction, or abet the designs of those who would subvert the laws of God, and undermine the faith of the Gospel. It is marvellous that men should always be found willing to undertake so vast a charge ; knowing that “unto whom much is given, of them will much be required ;” and that in this official capacity they may by a stroke of the pen do more to promote or to injure the interests of their fellow-men, than in their private capacity, they could effect by the labour of a life ! To you who hold the reins of a government so vast, be you of what party you may, we must address an earnest entreaty to take heed what you do. There is no individual so insignificant, within the wide limits of British sovereignty, as to escape the consequence of what you decide on in your offices. Temporally and eternally your measures may, and in some sort must, affect him ; and nothing can prevent your doing it injuriously, but a constant looking to God for help, a careful seeking in his word for the directions laid down. Whenever you exalt the vicious—



men whose principles and practices will not bear the test of that holy law which you profess to recognize as divine—whenever you give them authority or influence, whether over a mighty province, or in the heart of an obscure village, there the wicked will walk on every side: there God will be dishonoured, man oppressed, and a terrible score run up against your souls. You derive your power from one who derives her's immediately from God; and whose authority is made so far dependent on your co-operation, that, in the language of the constitution, 'The Queen can do no wrong;' because even if a desire to do wrong existed in the chief ruler of the land, it could not be carried into effect without a deliberate act of compliance, a positive accomplishing of the design on your part: while you, on the other hand, may mislead or deceive the royal mind, and obtain, by virtue of the confidence nobly reposed in your wisdom and integrity, full power to commit injustice in the Queen's name. This is plain speaking, certainly; but it is also plain fact; and if you believe what you admit before God, that "the craft and subtlety of the devil and man work evil among

the people," then what a call is here for circumspection on your part ! You have to deal with One who cannot be imposed on, and who will not be trifled with : One to whom all false ways are an abomination, and whose most terrible judgments have ever fallen, where authority was abused, true religion set at nought, and the cause of the poor perverted. Now, you cannot for yourselves oversee in detail the working of that extensive machinery which you are commissioned to impel ; but you can, and you must nominate to posts next under your's in power and influence, men of whom you have every reason verily to believe that they will, in their turn, use the like conscientious discrimination in appointments devolving on them ; and thus you have the means, and at your peril you must use those means, to ensure the promotion of peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, in the descending, but widely-radiating scale over which you preside ; looking down from an eminence surrounding the throne of your sovereign, under the immediate eye of God. Such is the sure method of duly exercising your high functions : so it is that



“ when the righteous are in authority the people rejoice.”

You preside over the revenue. This gives you a mighty hold on the prosperity of the people, to raise or depress it according to your movements. It is confessedly a most difficult department in all governments ; and situated as England is, the perplexities surrounding her financiers are all but endless. It is the sorest thorn in the side of a ministry ; for the people must necessarily be taxed, and to tax them to their own liking is a sheer impossibility. To view this painful duty as one where a negative benefit may be made to accrue to those classes who most require it, and with firm equity to demand from the wealthy according to their means, is a duty so obvious that none can gainsay it ; but too often the rich man grasps his most wanton superfluity more tenaciously than the poor man clings to his only blanket ; and the loss of parliamentary support from the former, which cannot be regained, looks more formidable in the eyes of a minister, than the insurrectionary violence of the latter, which may be put down by military force. Thus, to arrange a really equitable


taxation is a matter of more nerve than to conduct a foreign war : and great are the temptations that beset you to wring from the necessities of a struggling class what you may despair of extracting from the enormous possessions of those who would, if they could, add house to house, and field to field, till they were left alone upon the earth : yet here you must not falter : in such a cause greater is He that is for you than they who are against you. The nation knows no peril so imminent as that snare which the fear of man brings ; the aptitude of those high in place to overlook, or lightly to regard, the interests of the poor, to calculate on the loyalty and right principle of some, on the weakness and apprehensiveness of others, for submission to unjust measures ; and to secure at any price the adhesion of the wealthy, the powerful, the influential around them. How much of wrong, of oppression, of extreme wretchedness endured by the million, may be traced to the working of this pernicious system in a government, is obvious to all. Let but the individual whose interests more immediately clash with those of his poor neighbours get a seat in Parliament, and you

need not be told what a temptation that man's vote will become to you. Nothing short of a fixed resolve to rule in the fear of the Lord will be found an adequate preservative.

You direct our foreign policy. Hitherto we have not looked beyond the bounds of this empire—the British isles, and their actual dependencies : but what an awful aspect does the matter assume when we regard you as acting for England—regulating the national proceedings of Great Britain in the eyes of the whole world ! Our circumstances are so peculiar that it is difficult to estimate the importance of every, the slightest step taken by us as a people. That peculiarity consists in our religious institutions : the distinguishing badge of our Church is the abundance of pure scripture embodied in her services : our land is the land of Bibles : we are a spectacle to foreigners as regards the comparative observance of the Sabbath-day, holding out a striking contrast to the continental nations. Societies formed and upheld by the hands of the Church, (to say nothing of those which have sprung from private, individual effort) send forth teachers wherever the state plants

a colony, whose business it is to propagate the Gospel co-extensively with the civilization of distant and barbarous tracts of country. In short, be individuals what they may, the character of the English generally is that of a religious people ; and our religion professes to be founded on the pure, unmixed, unmutilated Word of Truth.

Now, whether you admit it or not, you are under an obligation before God to honour his name, thus inseparably connected with us, by a line of conduct consistent with the faith professed. The command that no man oppress his brother man ; that none cast a stumbling-block or occasion of falling in another's way ; that we do not covet or desire another man's goods ; and, in a word, that we do unto all men as we would they should do unto us, and love our neighbour as ourselves,—all this is as binding upon England in her diplomatic and other foreign relations, as it is upon any individual in the realm. The reason is the same, equally cogent in both cases ; that a contrary proceeding is offensive to God, calculated to bring dishonour on His name, and sure to expose the offender to his wrath.



Tried by this rule, how fearfully do we come short of our duty ! The system of overreaching ; of taking advantage where the other party is weaker or more unwary than ourselves ; of conniving at idolatry and other crimes, for the sake of present gain ; of wresting by force, or winning by stratagem, what we have no right to desire ; of undermining the power of rival nations, and making haste to be rich at the expense of any who may stand between us and the coveted object,—all these things are found occasionally to pollute our foreign transactions with the leaven of malice and wickedness ; and very rarely does a compunctious visiting appear to qualify our satisfaction in the acquirement of what may have been gained by means like these. National, as well as personal pride, will repel the charge ; but let those who have ever guided the helm in this department, ask their own hearts, in that secret communing when truth will make itself heard, whether the picture be incorrect. Let them call to mind how often the apprehension of dishonouring the religion of the Bible, or of incurring the displeasure of the Most High, has operated to deter them from

seizing some inviting opportunity for aggrandizing the country, or for arrogating to themselves the merit of a shrewd and successful stroke of policy. No stretch of imagination, no deep research into the records of past years, is required to show us that the country may be irretrievably committed to the prosecution of contests so unjust in their origin, so murderous in their progress, that while defeat would be ruin, success is a stain ; and in which the only solid satisfaction that a conscientious man can find in the most advantageous peace is derived from the fact, that it has terminated a dishonourable war.

There is a maxim current among politicians, the very mention of which, in a Christian country, is disgraceful ; that private vices are public benefits. We do not pause to demonstrate the notorious falsity of the proposition, but we must lament that something like a practical adoption of it is too often apparent among men who would probably reject the explicit theory. That good faith which a man would hold it infamous to lack, as a private individual ; that over-reaching which he would scorn to practise upon a tradesman ; that

ungenerous advantage which he would blush to take of a companion's inexperience or inadvertence ; those unjust means which nothing would tempt him to use, to augment the patrimony of his own house,—may lose their odious character when balanced against the evil of omitting to advance what he considers to be the interests of his country. So the vices of covetousness, fraud, cruelty, extortion ; yea, the deadly sin of keeping souls in darkness, promoting licentiousness, and patronizing idolatry, wear the garb of public virtues, when, through them, the territorial or financial possessions of the empire may perchance derive stability or receive an increase. On such measures can the divine blessing rest ? and if any deem that they can dispense with that blessing, let them at least manfully acknowledge that they have cast off all dependence on the Most High, and have undertaken to conduct the affairs of an empire not only apart from, but in defiance of, the will of Him who governs the earth which He has made.


The patronage of the Church is in your hands. What is the Church ? God's heritage ; His peculiar treasure, His Spouse, His

Body. Human imagination cannot reach a point of more awful responsibility than that of appointing chief rulers over the Church. It brings you, as it were, face to face with the Most High, and if you give spiritual authority to any man on another ground than this,—that he is the best qualified man you can find to “*feed the Church of God which He hath purchased with his own blood,*”* you commit a crime of the darkest, deepest dye that man can perpetrate. We approach this subject with fear and trembling, conscious that our words, however weak they be, may hereafter rise up in judgment against some who read them ; but it is a duty not to be evaded : we are bound to tell you, that it is at the peril of your souls if you trade with that costly talent, Church patronage, otherwise than for your Lord’s profit, that at his coming he may receive his own with usury.† Number not this, we beseech you, among the engines placed at your disposal for the furtherance of any secular object: it is a peculiar privilege, a high honour, and a searching test of your personal

* Matt. xxv. 27.

† Acts xx. 28.

allegiance to the Lord God Almighty. We will not even hypothetically speak of your regarding it otherwise, seeing that we address educated and baptized men, who ought not to be for an instant supposed capable of so sacrilegious an abuse of their delegated powers; but, still bearing in mind "those evils that the craft and subtlety of the devil or man worketh against us," which form the subject of your deprecatory prayer in public worship, we must remind you what treble vigilance is requisite in this quarter, "lest haply you be found to fight against God," by vesting authority and influence in the hands of any man who you do not conscientiously believe answers the description given by St. Paul of a ruler in the Church, in his two Epistles addressed to Timothy, a Bishop in the Church of Christ. You are mercifully furnished with that model of what God requires in a chief pastor: and surely, when you pore day and night over whatsoever works of man may tend to shed a light on the difficult maze of secular policy, you will not grudge half an hour of prayerful inquiry into the only Book than can guide you to the right use of



spiritual patronage. The very principle of self-interest should work hitherto ; for nothing can establish your sway like having the Lord on your side ; and miserable helpers are they who shall essay to uphold your power if He be against you !


You can so legislate as to strengthen the hands of Church dignitaries in their proper work ; and to induce a right exercise, by ecclesiastical and collegiate corporations, of the patronage invested in them. Here again is another high privilege of your office, in which you may especially serve God, while regulating public affairs. This branch of the matter properly includes the supply of an ample provision for the moral and religious instruction of the whole community. You find the country divided into parishes, and over each of these is appointed a spiritual instructor ; who, in turn, engages the assistance of others, his brethren in the work of the ministry. Now, our Lord's parting injunction was, " Feed my sheep," " feed my lambs." Assuredly, he who is appointed to do the former should do the latter also ; and every parochial clergyman in England must be supplied with

the needful means to fulfil his Master's command. That a family of baptized Christians should be without a Bible, or unable to read it if they had one, merely through their poverty, or utter ignorance of the faith into which they have been so baptized, is a slur that ought not for one moment to rest on a Christian government. We speak not only of these isles, but of our territorial possessions all over the world. Wherever England has a colony, there she must and will have a Church ; and to leave that Church without the means of pasturing the lambs of its fold, is a monstrous anomaly ; unparalleled and unpardonable. We earnestly press on you this solemn obligation ; and we assure you that such a seed-time now improved, while the good grain is at your disposal, will yield a harvest to gladden your eyes, and satisfy your souls, when all that now glitters around you shall have melted away into the nothingness from which all sublunary things emerged, and to which they must return, while he, and he only, who doeth the will of God, shall abide for ever.

CHAPTER XV.


TO THE BISHOPS OF THE CHURCH.

“HE that desireth the office of a Bishop desireth a good work :” but it is, even in the best of times, a work so arduous, so beset with difficulties, and overlaid with onerous responsibilities, that the ablest of mitred men has cause to exclaim, “Who is sufficient for these things!” Authority, however, has attractions for all: the power of doing good, of benefitting the Church of Christ, of making choice of fit persons duly to serve in the sacred ministry, of guarding the spiritual interests of the nation in the heart of the legislature, of advancing the pious and discountenancing the profane among the clergy,—these and similar privileges may outweigh many objections on the part of an



humble-minded, devout man, in the acceptance of an English bishopric ; more particularly if his faith can truly realize the only satisfactory reply to the foregoing query, and say " Our sufficiency is of Christ."


We do not pause to investigate the inducements presented to men of a different spirit. They ought not to be named in connection with the holy office of a Pastor in Christ's fold. Thirst of power, lust of gold, pride of place, do, alas ! operate in leading some to heap on their own heads the most fearful condemnation that man can bring himself under ; but with such anomalies we have nothing to do. One thing is certain : by whatever path an ecclesiastical ruler may have reached his present eminence, an ample field lies before him for the fitting exercise of his influence ; and God who is rich in mercy unto all that call upon Him, will not cast out the prayer that solicits pardon for the past, and grace for the future. Let no man, therefore, reject as inapplicable to himself, what is addressed to faithful shepherds : the vows of such are upon him, and according to the word which shall judge them at the last day, must




he also be judged. We speak unto you, Bishops of the English Church, as unto wise men : judge ye what we say.

You have engaged to instruct the people committed to your charge. What manner of instruction they are to receive is very specifically set forth. We quote the words of your engagement. ‘Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through Jesus Christ? And are you determined out of the same Holy Scriptures to instruct the people committed to your charge?’ to which you replied, ‘I am so persuaded, and determined by God’s grace.’ This duty of instructing all the people of his flock, no Bishop can adequately perform in his own person ; he must have assistants in the work, men whom he is empowered to ordain, and to set over the congregations of his diocese. They are his auxiliary eyes and mouths : he sees, by their help, into every corner of his diocese, however extensive, and by their means he fulfils in detail what is here so largely undertaken. We therefore, under this head, appeal to your faithfulness in carefully

examining into that of your appointed helpers in the work, over whom, by public authority or by personal influence, you certainly exercise sufficient control, to enforce the due fulfilment of those duties for which you stand voluntarily responsible. True, you find many established at their posts, when entering upon your charge, whom you cannot remove, unless for some scandalous offence, and who may yield little deference to your opinions or wishes ; but all these matters are fully known to the Great Shepherd, by whom "it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." We ask whether, to the utmost of your actual power, you are providing all the people committed to your charge, with instruction purely scriptural ? Whether, so far as your authority or persuasion can reach, every pulpit is occupied by a fit teacher, and every parish provided with a holy exemplar, as well in life as in doctrine ? Your simple, straight-forward form of engagement allows no saving clause of conformity to the usages of refined society ; leaves you no liberty to sacrifice, on the shrine of worldly good-breeding, what is




wholly consecrated to the Lord. These men, be they men of supreme learning, rank, wealth, or what not, must not stand between you and your people, excepting in one capacity : their office, like yours, is clearly defined : their pledge was given in the very words quoted above ; so that, should the Bishop require of them any thing contrary thereto, they are bound by a higher obligation to refuse compliance : but in all that accords with your mutual promise before God, they are pledged, reverently to obey their Ordinary, following with glad mind and will your godly admonitions, and submitting themselves to your godly judgments. If, therefore, it becomes known to you that any clergyman within your jurisdiction either neglects to instruct the people, or instructs them otherwise than out of the Scriptures ; setting forth doctrines that cannot be concluded and proved by the same Scriptures, do you interpose the authority vested in you, calling such teachers to a strict account, giving them godly admonitions, and passing on them godly judgments ? Laws, civil and criminal, may be enacted and rigidly enforced ; every convicted offender



may be visited with condign punishment, and all possible recompense may be awarded to such as do well ; but all must be in vain, if the people be “ not rightly instructed out of the Scriptures.” To this end, the nation has recognized and endowed a body of clergy, amongst whom you form the highest grade ; and to you is committed the oversight of that Church establishment on which the welfare, the peace, the safety of the nation mainly depend. A time is appointed by you to meet all the clerical teachers under your charge ; to ascertain the state of the several parishes and districts ; to compare evidence as to the way in which each has ordered the affairs of his own cure, and, *ex cathedra*, to pronounce on such matters as may especially concern the prosperity of your diocese. No machinery could be better arranged for the due discharge of your solemn functions, no greater facilities afforded for maintaining godly discipline, and enforcing a strict fulfilment of the pastoral office in all its branches, where all is fully acted upon. Surely, then, if the people be not taught, or if they be taught amiss, you cannot evade the blame : you must stand

convicted of a breach of trust, however man may be unable or disinclined to take cognizance of it ; while He who commanded you to “ feed the Church which he purchased with his own blood,” will, sooner or later, demand a full, a minute account of your stewardship.

You are pledged not only to discourage but to expel error. This may appear an impossibility, and generally speaking it is so ; for there are in every diocese many who will not submit to the authority of the Church established by law ; and who avail themselves of the tolerant character of our religion and government to promulgate every species of error. But here, also, to the extreme limit of your power, you must earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. A very important prefatory promise is annexed to this : you were asked, ‘ Will you faithfully exercise yourself in the same Holy Scriptures, and call upon God by prayer for the true understanding of the same ; so as you may be able by them, to teach and exhort with wholesome doctrine, and to withstand and convince the gainsayers ? ’ You answered, ‘ I will do so by the help of God.’ Then followed the



test, 'Are you ready, with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine, contrary to God's word ; and both privately and openly call upon and encourage others to the same ?' You gave answer, 'I am ready, the Lord being my helper !'


Now, of the Lord's readiness to help in such a work there can be no question, since it is the object for which the Christian ministry was instituted by Him : the point is, whether you indeed faithfully exercise yourselves in the Holy Scriptures, calling on God by prayer for the true understanding of the same, so as you may be enabled by THEM to withstand and convince gainsayers ; and not by mere human learning, systems of divinity, opinions cherished by men of other days, or theories started in the present times. There is not under heaven any touchstone whereby to detect error, or any weapon wherewith to drive it away when discovered, apart from these two means—Holy Scripture and prayer ; and having admitted this, by so answering the queries put under circumstances as solemn as man can well be placed in, it remains but to assure

yourselves that you are in the daily practice of these holy exercises, and the effect cannot be doubted. Erroneous and strange doctrines will then not be set forth with impunity by any class of persons within your several jurisdictions, and consequently not within this realm. Every minister will be straitly enjoined to search out, in his own parish, such as impugn the proper divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, an error utterly opposed to God's word ; and such as preach or teach infidelity, licentiousness, or other perversions of the truth. Both privately and openly you will call on your clerical brethren to use all faithful diligence to banish and drive away these things ; and you will especially give battle to the prevailing error of the day, by acting fully up to the spirit, if you cannot enforce the letter, of the sixty-sixth canon, which ordains that ' Every minister being a preacher, and having any Popish Recusant or Recusants in his parish, and thought fit by the bishop of the diocese, shall labour diligently with them from time to time, thereby to reclaim them from their errors ; ' setting forth also the plan to be adopted should the officiating minister

not be duly qualified, in the Bishop's estimation, for this important branch of his work. We all know, alike by observation and bitter experience, how this godly proviso has fallen into disuse ; but no living bishop has been consecrated, no priest ordained in the Church of England, without giving before God the promise that he will drive away ALL erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word ; which includes the substance of the sixty-sixth canon, and holds him bound to oppose not merely the spread but the existence of Popery ; and to labour for the recovery of every soul enthralled by that fatal error. This is a solemn thing : we know that in every instance the promise was given : we scarcely know any instance among our bishops where it is obviously fulfilled, with the faithful diligence enjoined. We see on every side evidences of the vigorous advances made, and the commanding positions taken up by Popery ; and we tremble for the shepherds, who seeing the wolf coming, appear to care so little for the sheep, taken and torn before their eyes. We must urge this point on your attention, and appeal to the unequivocal pledge required by the Church,

when placing you in an office of great trust and authority, and unreservedly given by you.

You have engaged to be merciful to the poor and needy. This class of claimants is very large, and mercy both to their souls and bodies is greatly called for. To provide for the latter, while leaving the former to perish, would outrage every clause of your consecration vow. The thing required by them is deliverance from a two-fold famine; a famine of bread, and a famine of hearing the word of the Lord. Adequate means were provided for giving our whole population the advantages of a public ministry, at a time when it did not amount to any thing approaching what it now is; and those means have scarcely been enlarged, to meet such an enormous increase of demand for the bread of life. Legislatorial interference is necessary here; but is all done that ought to be done, and that might be done by the heads of the Church? While vice abounds, ignorance darkens the land, and violence threatens it with destruction, are all available means used to teach the people out of the Holy Scriptures? Are there no funds from which, in the interim, a more numerous body



of faithful preachers might be supplied, and temporary places of worship provided, by hiring and licencing commodious buildings until the architectural arrangements are completed? We desire the multiplication of steeples and bells, but we would not defer till a sufficiency of the former are erected, and of the latter cast, the far more important multiplication of Bibles and Prayer-books, and scriptural sermons. It seems scarcely to have occurred to our bishops that they have power to transform, *pro tempore*, every barn in their dioceses into a church, the owner assenting ; and that it is not merciful dealing with the poor, to starve their souls till a particularly-formed dish is shaped out in which to serve up the meat that nourisheth unto eternal life. The case is one of alarming urgency, and we look to you for an effort answerable to the demand. One certain consequence of bringing our immense flocks in detail under the eyes of vigilant pastors, would be, the amelioration of their physical sufferings ; for it is not in the nature of man to look closely into the scenes of misery and destitution that exist in the now unvisited nooks of every parish, with-

out being moved to energetic efforts for their relief ; and what the united energies of a vast body of godly, conscientious ministers might do in rousing the humane feelings of the country we cannot compute. At present, this solemn duty of shewing mercy to the poor is devolved on paid lay-officials, men of whom each has his own farm, his own merchandize to look after ; who are very rarely of a character to trouble themselves about the spiritual condition of their needy pensioners, and who, therefore, take no further interest in them than to hear their representations of distress ; to decide whether they come within the letter of their instructions ; and to dole out, as frugally as possible, the fractional amount of that to which they are legally entitled. Far different this from the mission of him who comes in his Master's name, proclaiming pardon for sin through His atoning blood, and showing how God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

The man who does this is constantly reminded of his own equality with the poor creature whom he addresses : inasmuch as he too is a child of Adam, a sinner by nature and

practice ; condemned by the same holy law to a like punishment, and saved by the same grace that he teaches others to seek. What avail the distinctions of a day ? The course of his own teaching perpetually reminds him that he too came naked into the world, and naked he must depart from it : the sympathy thus engendered is the appointed means of leading the rich to show mercy to the poor, and where they are wanting, the omission cannot be supplied, nor the pledge redeemed.

The rigid examination of candidates for holy orders is an episcopal duty of infinite moment. The classical attainments of a man, and his acquaintance with theology as a system, are easily ascertained ; but a stricter, more individualized process is needful to probe the depth of his scriptural knowledge, in those points that more especially influence a man's public and private ministrations. A divinity student may be able to cite the Word of God fluently and aptly in the course of an examination, yet be lamentably ignorant of the book, as the fountain of spiritual knowledge ; the lamp that must guide his own feet while he holds it up for the guidance of others.

There is a technical knowledge of the Bible, as of any other class-book, unaccompanied with that appropriation, without which it ranks but in the learner's estimation as a profound treatise on abstract philosophy. He may fully admit, yea vehemently contend for, and be able triumphantly to establish, its divine origin ; yet the process by which he arrives at such conviction, and defends such position, may be similar in kind and effect with that by which he would establish the origin and date of the pyramids of Cheops ; leaving him practically as little influenced by the existence of the one as of the other. Such a candidate should be remanded to his study for a time : the unpleasantness of doing which must not outweigh the sacred obligation that demands it. Views of Christian doctrine seriously defective, apart from professional formalities, and motives for desiring ordination, little suspected perhaps, would be elicited by such rigorous examination ; and the certainty of having to undergo it would operate to deter many an unworthy aspirant from presenting himself before the bishop. He would seek out some more suitable line of life ; or with real purpose of

heart betake himself to the acquirement of those things in which he feels defective. In either case, the Church—that is to say the whole Christian community—would be materially benefitted.

You possess the power of refusing to institute unworthy presentees to livings. This is a power that ought to be in constant, vigilant exercise. The occasional abuses of patronage are admitted on all hands. Political, personal, and other motives, wholly apart from any concern for the glory of God or the well-being of his Church, will influence worldly men in the disposal of clerical preferment, and the check lodged with the diocesan is in many cases the only safeguard for the poor flock against “grievous wolves,” to say nothing of unthinking, uncaredful shepherds. How highly would it raise the episcopal office and character, how perfectly vindicate their usefulness, if every man possessing the gift of a living assuredly knew that any person he might appoint would undergo a searching, impartial inquiry, conducted by the authorized overseer of that portion of the Lord’s fold, previous to the ratification of his appointment! Good

men deplore the laxity of church discipline as now administered, or rather as now neglected ; but if every bishop exercised in his own see the authority vested in him, in these points alone, we should presently behold the evil well-nigh done away with. Unfit persons and their patrons are alike encouraged by the known disinclination of prelates to interfere ; but let inclination in a few cases be sacrificed to duty, and the world with its worldlings will be more cautious of attempting to profane the sanctuary for secular objects. *Unfitness for the office* is as legitimate a ground for the episcopal refusal of a presentee, as immorality or want of learning ; and unfitness for a charge so weighty may certainly consist with irreproachable morals, and undoubted erudition. The principle is admitted and acted upon in all ordinary callings ; men are rejected without any impeachment of their character, if obviously unsuited for the appointment they solicit. It is a strange anomaly that the most solemn and sacred of all undertakings is that in which a man notoriously defective in its fundamental requirements may aspire to with the greatest certainty of success. If there be any

doubtful point in our legal code, rendering it possible that the diocesan so objecting might be exposed to hostile proceedings, let the laws be amended to meet the difficulty, and no longer allow the bishop's hands to be tied, where he is sure to be most frequently and urgently called upon to stretch them out in defence of the church.

Another important branch of this parochial supervision should surely be brought before the especial notice of your lordships. The right office of a deacon is very perspicuously set forth in the Church, his province being that of an assistant to the fully-ordained and responsible incumbents: yet to deacons, to men too young for priest's orders, we often find the sole care of a parish intrusted; and thus not only is their incompetency to such a charge brought into public view, and the ministry thereby into contempt, but a real grievance is inflicted on the flock, who, contributing their full quota of temporal things, have a right to such spiritual superintendence as every parish is supposed to enjoy.

You hold a great public trust in the extensive Church patronage vested in your hands.


This affords an especial occasion of conferring the highest benefits on the Church and nation; of promoting, with a single eye, the glory of God, bringing forward men whose earnest desire it is to spend and be spent for the Gospel; who are every way qualified for the work of the ministry, but who, for lack of worldly wealth and influence, or from the modesty that usually accompanies true merit, and the humility inseparable from genuine piety, are not found in the ranks of competitors, or conspicuous among the eager claimants who surround you. The obligation so to do is clear and solemn: here is no neutral ground: he that is not for Christ in this matter, is against him, and he that gathereth not with him, scattereth abroad. It is not to be endured, that a bishop of the Church should advance to its posts of usefulness men of qualifications inferior to others whom they know where to find, merely because the former can plead some tie of kindred, or friendship, or enjoys the patronage of some powerful friend. Such inducements may assail the man, but the bishop—the overseer of a church whom God hath purchased with his own blood, and commanded

him to feed—must be invulnerable to such assault on his faithfulness. Against *his* presentation there is no appeal : he nominates, and he institutes. The possession of such power should be the guarantee for its most conscientious discharge in the sight of God and man. It does not often happen that the fittest men for advancement in the church of the Lord are to be found among the connexions and private friends of one individual : but it does too often happen that from such privileged circle the selections are uniformly made ; and we are thus compelled to fear that the motive which ought to be paramount, holds only a secondary place in the mind of the patron. In this, as in all cases, we see the necessity of constantly bearing in mind the cogent persuasive to diligent prayer, as admitted at your consecration. What was supernaturally decided by lot at the nomination of an apostle, will often be no less surely decided by some providential indication of God's will, as to whom He has chosen to fill vacancies in his Church, if the prayer of faith be breathed for his divine guidance.

You have a place and a voice in the highest

legislative assembly of the land. In virtue of this singular privilege you can stand forward, the originators and promoters of whatsoever measures you deem suitable, to extend the means of grace throughout our whole population, and to remove all positive obstructions to that extension. Supposing this advantage not to exist, how greatly would it be coveted by men, zealous for the promotion of spiritual objects ; yet finding no suitable organs for the expression of their wants and wishes among the laity ! We may conceive a bishop, saying, ‘ If I had a voice in the senate, such and such a deficiency should not long exist, nor such an obstruction stand in the way of the Church’s extension and the people’s advantage :’ but we can scarcely realize the picture of a bishop sitting silent and inactive, session after session, while wants without number remain unsupplied, and obstacles nearly as many unremoved. A cry of neglected souls, of British subjects denied their due participation in the spiritual abundance of the land and church, ought to be heard without ceasing, through their appointed mouth-pieces in the senate ; and very rarely would you plead in

vain ; whether for our home population, or for the millions of our fellow-subjects in India and other distant colonies. There is every disposition, in the upper house at least, to yield the most respectful attention to whatever the heads of the Church may say in reference to that body which they represent ; and, though the advantage of personally pleading before the Commons' house is not enjoyed, and perhaps a spirit less friendly to the ecclesiastical body is visible there ; still a fair measure of zeal and diligence manifested by our episcopal legislators on behalf of the Church, would be *dulce et decorum*, even in the sight of men who, caring for none of these things, still understand the political importance of the subject in reference to the great mass of the people ; and who would be ashamed to refuse what was required by teachers so much better instructed than themselves in the subjects under deliberation. Still, in the sight of a Christian pastor, it ought to be a small matter to be judged of man's judgment. He that judgeth is the Lord ; and He would surely own and bless a vigorous effort for the removal of many evils, and the multiplication of



advantages really within reach, if only a vigorous grasp was laid upon them.

The connexion between Church and State would not so aptly serve the purposes of those who go about, in quest of grievances wherewith to bait their traps for the unwary and unlearned, if it was visibly seen that thereby the spiritual necessities of the people were regularly brought before the rulers of the land, and fair provision made on the ground of such representation. Regarding the convened peers as an assemblage of those who enjoy, by hereditary succession, the most extensive proprietorship in the soil, and who are, therefore, the most nearly interested in the stability of vested rights, it is very fit that among them should be found some whose peculiar office it is to remind them how insecure are legal restraints imposed on men's persons and actions, while their minds are left unenlightened, and their corrupt natures unchanged. A mitred partisan, contending in the arena of angry debate, on subjects merely secular, is indeed a painful, a most humiliating spectacle; but scarcely less is he misplaced who, with the consciousness that many pressing wants on

the part of his absent flock, might be supplied, through his interposition, by the temporal power, remains inactive, as though he took his place in that noble assembly, merely as a badge of distinction, an honour not attainable by any of inferior grade among his clerical brethren ; or as though his vote on secular questions were the stipulated price of his advancement to the bench. We would rouse to a far higher sense of your privileges than the title which you bear, the authority which you hold, or the emolument so liberally attached to your pastoral supremacy, can possibly convey. We would put into your mouths the holy dignity of the Apostle's claim, when he magnified his office, for the Church's sake, and sought distinction as an ambassador for Christ. You are, in fact, a representative body, wholly distinct from every other branch of the legislature ; retained as advocates, to plead the highest interests of every human being within the realm, and to be found faithful in such an office is the only ambition suited to you : an ambition as far elevated above the low pursuits of earthly-minded men, as are the heavens high above our earth ; and

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outweighing the importance of worldly things,
as the vanishing baubles of this hour are out-
weighed by the awful realities of a coming
eternity.

CHAPTER XV.

TO THE CLERGY.


“I STIR up your pure minds by way of remembrance,” said the Apostle Peter to his fellow-workers in the ministry ; and trusting that your minds, reverend brethren, are also purified by faith, we would submit to your consideration a few points very needful to be pondered upon at all times, but especially so when darkness prevails to the extent that we are doomed to witness in these days ; when the inspired injunction, “ Fear thou the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change,” is deliberately set at nought in each of its particulars : when the sacred office of the ministry is decried as a system of priestcraft, suited only to bygone days of ignorance and superstition ; and when,

alike in reference to magisterial, ecclesiastical, monarchical, and divine authority, the all but universal language is, " Our lips are our own : who is lord over us ? ' "

To stem this tide of moral and political disorganization, is your office. The arm of the law is strong, but it reaches not beyond the outer man : it is not a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart : it grapples not with inbred corruption, nor can it by any means provide the sinner with a way of escape from the enemy who holds him captive. It takes cognizance of past offences, as they affect the well-being of the community at large, and exacts from the transgressor such measure of atonement for the wrong done to society, as its penal inflictions can command ; but in the mighty, the all-important transaction of turning him from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, it does not, because it cannot, intermeddle. The law is stern and unforgiving ; and it is only when the sovereign attribute of mercy interposes, not to administer, but to set aside the actual law, that the criminal may elude its grasp. Indispensably necessary to the very existence

of social order, these laws of man assume not to do more than guard the public safety ; and just in proportion as men become hardened in crime, confederate to do evil, their power diminishes—their administrators are the first to feel the vengeance of rampant rebellion.

Yours is a different position : to you is committed the ministry of reconciliation through an atonement already offered : you proclaim an amnesty, where mercy rejoices against judgment ; and although you cannot communicate the grace of repentance, or confer upon any man the gift of faith, or bestow a heart of flesh in place of that stony heart which refuses to be impressed with the transcript of God's perfect law, still you have undoubted authority to declare to every human being that the grace, the gift, the blessing are his ; if he be but content to turn unto God, who waiteth to be gracious, and who will in no wise cast out any poor penitent, coming to Him by Christ. It is by faithfully declaring this " true saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," that you may confidently hope to achieve what no merely human legislation can even attempt ;




to reach the hidden springs of action, and to render the fruit good by making the tree so. We therefore most anxiously and affectionately beseech you to bear constantly in mind the vast importance of your holy office ; and in an especial manner to give yourselves to a studious, prayerful, and laborious preparation for that very momentous branch of your sacred ministrations, the ordinance of preaching.

Many among you are gifted with great facility of composition, or a ready extemporaneous utterance ; and they are indeed valuable helps to you : but when we consider the variety of characters, and the very unequal development of the intellectual faculties, comprised in the usual number of any ordinary congregation, and remember that the teacher's office is rightly to divide the word of truth, and to give to each individual his portion in due season, the magnitude of the burden laid upon him becomes more apparent. He must labour to impress the most learned with the importance of what he is declaring : at the same time, he must not sacrifice to them the equal spiritual right of the ignorant rustic who sits shrouded in a distant niche, and claims

his portion too—the portion assigned by One who is no respecter of persons. You must have experienced the difficulty of clothing your thoughts in language sufficiently comprehensible to this class; not because such language does not readily occur; not because you have not, in the Holy Scriptures themselves, a perfect model of the sublime simplicity aimed at; but because a false criterion is unhappily established, and the preacher who adapts his discourse to the understanding of the stable-boy, may perchance be judged incapable of a higher style of composition, by the accomplished gentlemen whose horses that stable-boy attends upon. Such judgments are, indeed, often passed; and a cruel wrong it is to the souls of the indigent, a manifest snare of the devil, who dreads lest, by the faithful preaching of the Gospel to the poor, as Christ preached it, and enjoined its being done by His servants, captives should be rescued from his bonds, and his devices frustrated, as they ever will be where the Word of God has free course and is glorified.


By cultivating this rare grace of simplicity, —a grace compatible, as the Bible proves, with

the utmost majesty of style,—you will convince your poorer brethren that you honestly desire their edification ; and one certain effect will be to attach them not only to your ministry, but to your person. This will greatly smooth the way to that intercourse which every true pastor must earnestly desire to establish between himself and his flock—pastoral visits to humble families, where counsels given in general terms from the pulpit, may be enforced with especial reference to the individual characters and circumstances. He who has on the Sabbath set forth Christ crucified, even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, in the sight of the whole congregation, will seek, in these week-day visits, occasions for persuading each smitten soul to look unto Him and be saved. Indeed, it is earnestly to be desired that you should find the fields of your labour so apportioned as to admit of a perfect course of domestic visitation, at no very distant intervals ; than which nothing can be better adapted mutually to encourage the minister and his people, the former to exhibit, the latter to follow, a blameless example. The unequal division of parishes, of which we else-



where complain, and its consequent imposition on the minister, of more duty than he can possibly perform, is a grievous hindrance to you : especially to be lamented when we consider that the healthiest frame often enshrouds the most diseased soul ; and that he who is laying up treasure at will for himself, is frequently the least rich towards God. The sick in body and the outwardly necessitous have a claim not to be disputed, and few parochial clergymen would neglect them ; but the robust and the wealthy rarely receive their due portion of clerical care out of the pulpit, and such deprivation they ought not to suffer.

When the Apostle Paul taught from house to house, he was making the best provision against his people's neglect of assembling themselves together. Few things are so likely to turn the balance, in a mind wavering between the duty of going to the house of God, and traitorous inclination to stay away, as the expectation of a friendly visit from the minister to enquire the cause of absence. The regular habit of church-going is a point that you cannot but desire to enforce upon all classes : its want is at once discouraging



to yourselves, and indicative of an evil tendency among your people. The formal, punctual attendant on public worship *may* be a worthless, an abandoned character at home : but he who never worships in public at all *cannot* be what he ought ; nor is he in the way of hearing what, by God's blessing, might convert him from the error of his way.

The temporal comfort and welfare of the poor may be promoted by you to a surprising extent. It is emphatically your business so to promote them, seeing you bear the commission, and come in the name of Him, who went about doing good. You cannot, indeed, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils, as the first Apostles were enabled to do ; but you bear with you the record of their miracles, and can show the blessed application of those acts to the state of the spiritually sick,—souls stained with a moral leprosy, dead in trespasses and sins, possessed with the diabolical passions that rule in man's evil heart of unbelief. You will be hailed as a messenger of mercy and peace, even if you have only sympathy to bestow in reference to their bodily sufferings ;

and God will give you persuasive power to open the hearts and purses of their richer neighbours, when making a transition from the huts of poverty to the mansions of opulence, or at least the abode of easy competence. There is one evil very prevalent in the cottages of the poor, into which if you enquire you will be roused to zealous efforts for its removal. It is, indeed, most shocking in its nature, and appalling in its frequent results. We allude to the want of decent separation in the sleeping apartments of poor families. Cases have been reported, too dreadful to detail; but one or two of a less frightfully revolting nature may serve as a clue to all the rest. We shall give them in the words of the Commissioners, who investigated and confirmed the facts.

‘A man, his wife, and family, consisting in all of eleven individuals, resided in a cottage containing only two rooms. The man, his wife, and four children, sometimes five, slept in one of the rooms, and in one bed, some at the foot, others at the top, one a girl above fourteen, another a boy above twelve, the rest younger. The other part of the family

slept in one bed in the keeping-room ; that is, the room in which their cooking, washing, and eating were performed. How could it be otherwise, with this family, than that they should be sunk into a most deplorable state of degradation and depravity ? . . . The eldest, a female, has had a bastard child ; and another, younger, also a female, but grown up, has recently been sentenced to transportation for stealing in a dwelling-house.'

' I visited a house in Wyebriidge-lane, where there was a case of fever ; I found the man and a daughter, about eighteen years old, in one bed ; a lodger, a young man about twenty, in another bed, and all in one room up-stairs.'

' A single dormitory for a whole family, and not unfrequently a single bed for both sexes, adults, must lead to a state of horrid demoralization.'


' In the Hastings cottages, all the inmates generally sleep in one room, though sometimes the man and his wife have a separate apartment ; but all the children, of both sexes, almost invariably use the same sleeping-room. In Tunbridge Wells, the poor have not often

more than two rooms for a family, in one of which the boys sleep, and in the other the man, his wife, and the girls. Sometimes four beds may be seen in a room, divided by a curtain between each.'


We do not pursue these descriptions, confident that to have your attention directed to the bare existence, and unhappily the general existence too, of so dreadful an evil, will produce the desired effect. You will seek a welcome in these wretched abodes, that you may on the one hand impress on their inmates the danger of thus hardening their offspring in indecency, and on the other exert your influence with their landlords to procure some improvement in the accommodations provided for the labouring poor.

Lastly, the great national work of education rests mainly in your hands, as it is most desirable that it should do. A vigilant superintendence of this interesting portion of the Lord's vineyard, need scarcely be enjoined on any of His labourers, so great is the encouragement, so rich the promise annexed to the employment. Difficulties do and will beset the path of those who are earnest in it; for


the enemy of souls understands, even far better than we can do, the value of the sowing season ; and the world will also put in its claim against God, by extolling the usefulness of such knowledge as is the perfection of foolishness when substituted for, or preferred before, the knowledge that maketh wise unto salvation. To cultivate intellect is the fashionable panacea for all moral and political evil ; but ‘ Intellect without God ’ is the phrase aptly used by a distinguished living poet to characterize Satan himself. That knowledge is power, has become the leading axiom of the day : but apart from the presiding, governing, commanding influence of vital religion, what is it but the power of a mighty steam-engine, self-impelled, destitute of its appointed guide, and carrying irresistible destruction wheresoever chance may direct its wild and fierce career ? We would not that a poor man should be found, wheresoever the British standard waves, who could put from him the book of wisdom with the plea, ‘ I am not learned ; ’ but to make religion merely an adjunct, a collateral branch of instruction, a matter of taste and selection ; to rank the Holy Bible as a class-



book, to be taken up in its turn, or subject to the approval or rejection of those who send the child to school, is an offence which we cannot for a moment suppose any minister of the gospel capable of conniving at. We name it only to rouse your active and strenuous opposition to so infidel a course, and to remind you on how false, how ruinous a principle, the work is likely to be conducted, if you withhold your hands from it, or silently relinquish your primary claim to the supervision of what God has committed to your charge: the feeding of the lambs; the training up of children in the way they should go, the bringing of them to Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Your office it is to combat the rage for unsanctified learning; to place "the kingdom of God and his righteousness" in the fore-front of all that his creatures ought to seek; with spiritual weapons to "cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself above Christ;" to elevate the law and the testimony in the sight of all men; boldly proclaiming that, "if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."




Whether or not the legislature shall think fit to place in your hands the means requisite to provide education for *all*,—you will always find a flock, peculiarly your own, looking up to you for that which it is your happy privilege to provide ; and though your faith may be tried, and your patience tested for a season, through opposition, ingratitude, indifference, and the many other difficulties that you are called on to surmount, you may still be assured that to no part of your arduous duties can the word of promise be more confidently applied than to this of education : “ He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”



CHAPTER XVI.

TO MAGISTRATES.

THE magisterial office is beautifully described in Scripture. “Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain ; for he is the minister of God ; a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.” To you then, the magisterial ministers of God, appointed to judge the cause of your fellow-men, to uphold right and to avenge wrong, to do good to the upright and peaceable, and to execute wrath upon evil-doers, we would now speak ; honouring your office, for it is one of




paramount importance; indispensable to the very existence of civil government.

Offences must come; the fallen nature of man, the activity of his spiritual enemy, the constitution of society even in its best state, all conspire to produce frequent transgression of the law, both divine and human. Your part is to take cognizance of offences against the latter; while to the former you must look for guidance in every decision. Happily for us all, the laws of the land are so framed that none can be compelled to violate the commandments of God in duly administering them: you may oft be led to wish that more extensive power rested in your hands, to redress peculiar grievances, or to punish crimes not strictly comprehended within the letter of the statute-book; but in no case are you necessitated to afflict the innocent or to reward the guilty. If, through the imperfection inseparable from human institutions, such anomaly were found to exist, it would not stand through a single session of Parliament against a combined application of the magistracy for its revision and correction. To do justice, therefore, and to love mercy, are as consistent with

your official obligations as they are consonant to the will of God ; and you hold a power the most extensively beneficial that man can desire to wield. At the same time your difficulties are great ; the hindrances, discouragements, disappointments, and disgust that a conscientious magistrate must calculate on encountering, cannot be computed ; while the spectacle of human depravity on which he is daily compelled to fix his eye, would suffice to chill the glow of the most philanthropic bosom that ever felt the pulse of life. Yet in the face of all this, your path is marked out, and you must walk in it without turning to the right hand or to the left.


You are God's vicegerents. He has declared it ; denouncing those who resist your power, as resisting his ordinance, and exposed to his judgment. He whom you thus represent is essentially just and righteous, holy and true : He accepteth no man's person ; he cannot be bribed ; he will not be flattered ; partiality is hateful to him. He is especially a judge of the widow, a father to the fatherless, and he avenges the poor. In all these particulars you are required to resemble him ;

otherwise you frustrate his design, falsify his word, pervert his ordinance, and by causing his way to be evil spoken of, you incur his most wrathful indignation. If two quarrelsome parties come before you, under circumstances legally admitting an amicable adjustment, you are there as the minister of Him who is the Author of peace. If a case of aggression is presented, where poverty seeks protection or redress, you appear for One who delivereth the poor when he crieth ; the needy also, and him that hath no helper. "The statute-book may be misinterpreted, judgment wrested, privilege abused, and the very enactment that sustains our rights made an instrument of wrong ; but in all this your proceedings are registered, with every secret spring that moved the mind ; from the positively corrupt motive, sacrificing to self-interest the cause of justice, to the momentary ill-humour that vents itself on any present object, or the impatient weariness that longs to escape from a disagreeable post. What you regard as trivial, because perhaps the persons concerned are poor and despised,—may involve the destiny of all their after-years. Their little all may hang on your




thoughtless decision ; and more than life or death may be the issue. A day's business is sometimes dispatched at a price that you would not deliberately pay for years of indulgence.

You arbitrate between master and servant. This is a more important matter than at the first glance appears : a disposition on the one hand to overstrain lawful authority, and on the other to rebel against it, is all but general ; and to strike an even balance is among the most difficult of all things. There is a summary mode of settling such questions that leaves neither party any pretext for seeking another tribunal, yet aggravates on both sides the evil it ought to allay. Assuredly man's natural bias is to uphold the privileges of his own class in society, or political leanings may give a still more powerful twist in the opposite direction ; while the affair may not be deemed of sufficient importance so to rouse the patriotic principle as to induce an inquiry what decision will best promote the public weal. And if neither this nor the known will of God is appealed to as the standard, inferior motives will creep in, perverting or obscuring the course of justice,




and adding fuel to a fire that threatens present destruction. The only safeguard is to be found in a constant application of the rule, that righteousness exalteth a nation; and in an award that shall neither sanction aggression from beneath or oppression from above; neither to amerce the richer man because he can afford to lose, nor to disgrace the poorer because his good name may seem of inferior value: still less to grind him down for the profit of his superior.

You are the guardians of public morals. One of the worst features of the daily press, is the tone of levity in which Police reports are given. This it may be beyond your power wholly to suppress, but you can do much, very much, towards checking it. A few words strongly spoken by a right-minded magistrate, will always place a matter in a point of light calculated to shame the unfeeling jester; who is, perhaps, reckoning on the credit he shall obtain by rendering the sins and sufferings of his fellow-creatures, or at best their infirmities and follies, as ludicrous as possible in the public eye. This is a duty you cannot with a good conscience neglect: for much of a




contaminating character is always to be found in this department of the daily news ; and whatever tends to attract the giddy mind of youth in quest of amusement, familiarizes it also with images of vice. There are some who do not scruple to encourage this profanation of a court of justice, even while presiding over it ; and they have much to answer for : but it is extensively connived at, if not as a harmless pleasantry, still as a necessary evil ; whereas it is both harmful in a high degree, and altogether unjustifiable. The thought that an oath has been taken,—the “ great and terrible name ” of God invoked,—and that justice, in all cases a most sacred thing, is the object sought for,—ought to fence your seats of judgment from the approach of such unseemly mockings. The very things of which the Spirit of God has declared that they shut men out from the kingdom of heaven, seem to be selected as affording the fittest subjects for laughter. Fornication, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, envyings, drunkenness, revellings,—all these appear, decked with the gay trappings of wit and drollery, and intermingled with the breach of the third




commandment, until the whole becomes an outrage on morality that would not be tolerated, if it had not too extensively pervaded with its own profaneness, the framework of society.

You are called on to grant and renew licenses to places which you know are set apart for purposes utterly ruinous to the youth of both sexes, and which thrive by promoting habits of drunkenness among all classes. This is a grievous blot on the statute-book, and must inflict pain on every man who feels either as a father or as a member of society, interested in its well-being ; much more as one who is solemnly bound to act for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. You cannot refuse what the law grants through you ; but you have a discretionary power, extending, if you would vigorously apply it, almost to the abatement of the nuisance. It never was contemplated by the framers of our laws, that public crimes should be legalized ; and what greater crime can be publicly committed against the plain commands of God, than that men should be authorized to open their houses for the avowed purpose of inciting their neighbour to excess in strong


drink, and engaging him in such revellings as must naturally lead to still darker guilt? We call on you to go to the extremest length of the letter and spirit of your commission, to lessen the number, if you cannot extinguish the existence, of these moral pest-houses. Your surveillance exerted to the utmost, would render the worst of them losing speculations, and so, on the principle of man's selfishness, ultimately put them down. They are enormous evils; crying sins that provoke God's vengeance; and the policy that connives at their existence is directly opposed to his sovereignty. Before affixing your signature to such a document, ask your heart whether you would do so if assured that your own son, your daughter, wife, or sister, would be among the frequenters of that house. If not, you are using the ordinance of God in the magistracy as an instrument for extending the dominion of Satan: and far better for you to relinquish a post held on trust for the public weal, than occupy it at the price of encouraging that which effectually undermines the country's prosperity, by impoverishing, degrading, demoralizing, and destroying her children.



You are the protectors of female modesty. Let but the women of a land become shameless, and farewell to all that is worth preserving in it! Public indecency is guarded against by enactments which prove how high the grace of modesty is estimated among us; but instances sometimes occur wherein the magistrate appears to forget that he is the living and acting soul of that body of laws. Not to speak of the indifference with which the announcement is in general received, that some party before the bench, complainant or defendant, belongs to the order of prostitutes, there is a slowness to rebuke individuals, when the circumstances involve a clear admission of having offended against purity; and there is a tacit acquiescence in the presumed fact, that profligacy must needs abound. But cases often occur wherein one of your number has the opportunity of directly commending, if not rewarding indications of virtuous principle, and of shaming if he cannot punish the reverse. We would ask, are you equally sensitive on behalf of the modesty of a poor friendless girl, as of that of your own female connexions? The just judge cannot be



a respecer of persons ; and practices that must be very grievous to a chaste mind, prevail within your jurisdiction, in many instances, where, if you interfered, they must be laid aside, or at least mitigated. Scarcely any scene of labour, where numbers are employed, is free from this stain ; a little enquiry would show it ; and by interfering, you would confer a boon, not only on the aggrieved individuals, but on the whole community. The mind is gradually reconciled to grossness ; then hardened in it ; and so led on to look at vice itself complacently, until it becomes wholly vitiated. Modesty is a truly British plant, it rarely flourishes on continental soils ; and here we seem to be losing our appreciation of it. An instance of what a magistrate can do to root it up, will go further than many speculations as to how he may promote its growth. The case is a glaring one, and, it is to be hoped, not often paralleled : but it does not stand alone in kind, even if it does in degree. ‘ A servant girl, named Mary Morgan, was brought before the Cheltenham magistrates for running away from service. She had been hired at Cirencester for a year



certain on the 17th of October, and went away two days after. Her excuse was, that she did not like the ways of the house. 'Why?' said the magistrate's clerk. After some coyness, she said, 'Because I had to go through the man's bedroom to my room.' The magistrate replied, 'This is a common thing in farm-houses;' and the girl was sent to Northleach gaol for fourteen days!

We adduce this flagrant case, as a specimen of the power vested in the magistracy, not of their general disposition in the exercise of that power. Universal indignation marked the public sense of this tyrannical outrage. That the charge should have been dismissed, a severe reprimand bestowed on the complainant, and every means used to shame the heads of families out of so indecent and cruel an arrangement of their dormitories, none seemed to question; yet there stood the naked fact, bearing fearful testimony to the existence of evil at the very fountain-head of local dominion. Recent legislation has relieved the man from the burden of supporting his illegitimate progeny, and laid it on the wretched victim of his seductions; who, in giving

birth to the child is excluded from the pale of respectability, and becomes disqualified for service. A poor young creature is led to make what she considers an advantageous agreement in a decent family, and finds the interior of the dwelling so ordered that she cannot by any possibility escape incessant importunities. She knows that in some unguarded hour she may yield ; ruin, temporal and eternal, is before her on the one hand, on the other a breach of contract. We marvel what would have been the result of an appeal from her, in this stage of the business, to the seat of justice : probably the too common reply, ‘ I have no power to interfere—the law does not provide for your case : you must fulfil your engagement ; ’ but though this might have been the official answer, sure we are that a magistrate who feared God and loved his neighbour, and rightly regarded his own responsibilities, would have interfered in his private character ; would have remonstrated with the parties, who thus cruelly pandered to the worst passions of their dependants, wantonly leading them into temptation ; and would finally have used this clue to discover similar instances of demoral-

izing arrangements, that he might to the utmost of his power check them. The female poor have a great claim on you ; their position is always unsafe, and if the shield of magisterial protection was more generally thrown before them, if they were encouraged to make known their need of it, and to calculate on its ready help, what a mass of crime, usually terminating in infanticide or suicide, would be averted ! This work of mercy may not be specified in your commission, but God requires it at your hands, and your consciences must bear secret testimony that it is a reasonable service and a bounden duty.

To fulfil a charge according to the strictness of the letter, and to go no further, may satisfy man's legal demand, and silence the clamours of natural conscience ; but it will yield the mind no solid satisfaction, confer no benefit on our country, nor abide the strict judgment of God. No form of words can fully set forth what is necessarily implied in a faithful discharge of duty ; and the higher the office, the more complicated must those influential duties become. If undertaken for dis-


tion's sake, or as a gainful speculation, a man's conduct cannot be expected to rise above the level of his unworthy motives ; but let such remember that they have dared to make sordid merchandize of things most sacred in the sight of God : the seat of justice, the sword of vengeance, the righteousness of a nation, and the cause of the poor.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LEGAL AND MEDICAL PROFESSIONS.

IN addressing the Bar, we would include not only those who are at this time engaged in the practice to which the term is usually confined, but such also as have already attained what every individual in the profession is supposed to aim at. In all its stages, from the perusal of the first brief, to the assumption of the highest legal rank and authority in the realm, the calling is one that requires a more than ordinary share of divine assistance; for the temptations inseparable from it are among the most insidious that man can encounter; and its responsibilities, when a higher office is reached, are tremendously great. The Judge has before him a fellow-man, an heir of immortality, probably in the bloom of life, full

of health, vigour, and the natural prospect of many lengthened years. He hears the testimony brought forward to criminate that man, and the defence set up, either in contradiction of such testimony, or in palliation of the offence which cannot be disproved. It is his to record, to weigh, to decide on the merits of this conflicting evidence, with all but the certainty that his decision will direct the Jury in their verdict ; and that if they pronounce the wretched being guilty, he must, before leaving that seat, pass on him the sentence of condemnation, involving but too probably the horrors of an undone eternity. He knows that they who now face each other, in characters so widely opposite, must stand side by side before the tribunal of an unerring Judge ; and that among the deeds done in the body of which he must then give account, the transaction of that day will bear a prominent part. The heart that does not quake under circumstances so solemn, must be strong indeed, and the presumption would be, that it was hard also, if in its own might alone it stood the ordeal ; but there is a promise, always found by those who seek it to be faith-



ful and sure, that strength shall be given according to the day, and wisdom according to the need, of the humble inquirer.

It is, however, to one part of the Judge's office that we would particularly address ourselves : the terms in which a convicted criminal is usually exhorted to prepare himself for the death that awaits him. Instead of offering any comment of our own, we will quote, at length, a speech of the late Judge Foster, delivered ten years since, when passing sentence on a murderer whom he was compelled to leave for execution. After remarking on the nature of his crime, and the evidence by which it was established, he thus proceeded :—

‘ Unhappy man, your remaining hours on earth are now but few ; let me implore of you to employ them in seeking for mercy in another world. In this world, there is no mercy for you. Reflect that ere two short days shall pass, all this apparatus of human justice, which now fills you with terror, shall have passed away. This court-house—the prison—the world itself will have fallen from beneath your feet, and you will stand unsupported and alone—not as now, at the bar of a fellow-

sinner, but in the presence of Almighty God, to answer for your crime ; and not for this crime alone, but for the offences of your whole life ; a God “ who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,” and in whose sight the angels themselves are not free from charge.

‘ How then in his presence is the blood-stained murderer to appear ? Well may he “ call upon the rocks to fall upon him, and the hills to cover him.” But though you must tremble, you need not despair. Praised be God, it is my duty and my privilege to assure you, that there is forgiveness with God even for such a criminal as yourself. If the joyful intelligence has not already reached your ears, receive from me the assurance that the word of God declares, that Jesus Christ “ came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance ;” and that He “ came to seek and to save that which was lost ; ” and that “ his blood cleanses from all sins,” and not, as has by some been vainly taught, from small sins only.

‘ The same blessed word assures us that though “ our sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow,” that “ as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he set our sins

from us ;” and He has himself, in his own words, solemnly assured us, that “ whosoever cometh to him he will in no wise cast out.” This expression, “ whosoever,” including the vilest of wretches ; and the words “ in nowise ” assuring us of the impossibility of rejection.


‘ He died upon the cross for this your murder,—if you will turn to him in faith, and repose your guilt with confidence upon his sacrifice ; but faith in him for this purpose is the indispensable and sole condition of your acceptance—a faith that will reject the hope of every other ground of pardon,—of everything that you can do for yourself,—of everything that any fellow-sinner can do for you, and that will rely solely on your Saviour having shed his blood for you, and died, “ the just for the unjust, that he might bring even you to God.”

‘ And say not to yourself, your time is too short for reconciliation. If the magnitude of your crimes need not plunge you into despair, neither need the shortness of the time. No time is too short for returning to Him. Even in the moment when our Lord was taken “ by wicked hands and crucified and slain,” a malefactor who, like yourself, was dying a victim


to public justice, and who carried his madness and his blasphemy down almost to the last hour of his existence, reviling his Saviour even at the very moment when he was himself hanging by his side, suddenly became touched by Divine grace ; turned to him, a suppliant for salvation ; confessed the justice of his own punishment ; and prayed to be remembered by his Lord in a future state of being ; and he was answered by our Lord with an assurance that on that very day he should be with him in Paradise. Jesus Christ is “ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ; and you may believe, and you may hope, and you may rely on it that the same mercy and forgiveness which was extended to the dying thief, will not be refused to the dying murderer, if you, that murderer, in equal penitence and equal faith, shall now be found to implore it.’

This can need no comment from us :—the leading thought to which it gives rise, is the question,—Are such truths often delivered from that elevated seat ? May the example be deemed worthy, as indeed it is, of general imitation, by all who are called to fulfil the like awful duty !

But we would say a few words to the members of the bar now pressing onward to the desired possession of higher rank and privileges. These are legitimate objects of your ambition; but bear in mind the snares that are spread in your path, and the miserable nature of the bargain made, if you purchase all that your largest desires can grasp at the cost of your integrity. The necessity sometimes laid upon you of putting the best aspect on a cause which you know to be unjust,—as when you are called to plead on behalf of some offender to whom the justice of the country accords the benefit of counsel,—must often be painful to an honourable mind; but voluntarily, deliberately, to undertake, for gain or applause, the conduct of an unjust suit, or a dishonest defence, is to sell yourselves cheap indeed to the father of lies! Neither custom, nor any imaginary necessity, can divest of its odious features, or screen from its future penalty, so grievous an offence against truth and justice. Your refusal so to prostitute the talents with which your God has intrusted you, accompanied by a plain statement of your reason for such refusal, would at once relieve your own



conscience from a burden, the weight of which will press heaviest when your failing heart and flesh can least support it ; and hold forth an example whose spreading influence will work more ' reforms in Chancery ' and in all other courts, than the most laborious legislation can ever accomplish. We do not despair of seeing a band of men stand forth, whose numbers would rapidly increase, adopting for their rallying cry the old chivalrous proclamation, " God preserve the right ;" making it distinctly known to their legal brethren in a subordinate branch of the profession, that no brief would be accepted in a cause where the loop-holes of law were calculated upon as means of escape from the pursuit of even-handed justice ; and that the learning, experience, eloquence, and other talents by them enjoyed, were held in trust, to be guarded from the contamination now unhappily so general, just because it is considered inseparable from the practice of the courts. The poor and oppressed, the widow and the fatherless, the simple and the ignorant, would then know where to appeal ; and though fees might be neither so rife, nor briefs so plenti-




ful as those of their less conscientious brethren, the blessing of uprightness would be found to outweigh many treasures of the unjust ; and it would be found too, that godliness is profitable for all things ; having the promise of this life, as well as of that which is to come.

We know that there are such men even now at the Bar, and prospering there : we say to them, Show yourselves : avow your principles, and form a nucleus, the ultimate extension of which no man can foresee, but which may be estimated by the fulness of the promise of God to his favoured nation : “ I will make thine officers peace ; and thine exactors righteousness.”

We now turn to the Medical Profession ; a class second to none in the amount of good or evil lying within the sphere of its influence. And first, in reference to their practice among the poor, we would suggest an enquiry to be answered within the recesses of their own bosoms : whether the poverty of a patient never serves as a screen for gross neglect, or marks him out as the subject of dangerous or cruel experiments, which would not be at-

tempted on one of a higher grade. That such things do occur is notoriously true ; but each must examine the record of his own conscience for particulars. There are many, yea, very many in the profession, whose tender compassion for the poor sheds a halo round their characters ; who will sit beside the straw pallet of the expiring beggar, and use all their laboriously-acquired art to alleviate pangs they cannot avert ; who remember that “ in the image of God made He man,” and that to trifle with the life of a human being is a crime of the deepest dye, in the sight of Him who will bring to light all the hidden things of darkness. Still there is room for self-examination among the bulk of our professional men on this fearful point ; for, next to inculcating a false religion, certainly the abuse of means ostensibly applied to relieve bodily ills, is the most iniquitous form of treachery and wrong. The inadequate remuneration doled out to parochial surgeons and assistants, with the great sacrifice of time, and often of lucrative practice, required of them, is a crying grievance as regards both classes of sufferers—the doctors and their




patients: we admit the frequent impossibility of one man's traversing the extent of country, and paying due attention to the scattered individuals included within his district, even though he should suffer an interloper to supplant him among the wealthy, and leave him little besides his Union to attend to. The surgeon may do his utmost, yet have to charge himself with partial neglect, in reality chargeable upon others. We pass no censure on such a man; but if the interior of our hospitals, and surgeries, and the hovels of the sick destitute poor, were laid open to the eye of man, as they lie open beneath the eye of God, a remonstrance, a cry for mercy, would burst from many a lip, now silent, only because bereft of hope. The bungling operations of inexperienced youths, the unrestrained ebullitions of impatience or ill-humour, elsewhere excited, the temptation to try novel, hazardous, and often most terrific experiments, the success of which may exalt the inventor to eminence in his profession;—all these things give rise to a sickening amount of untold tortures, which none but the forlorn poor are subjected to. It is an item in the out-

standing debt of justice before God that must be looked into when the Books are opened, and each individual has to answer for himself; but it touches us nationally also, for it is well known to those who could, if they were so minded, enforce better regulations, that much is habitually done to familiarize the minds of medical students with wanton cruelty; and that with a few noble exceptions, the course of their public instruction runs very much in the direction of avowed infidelity. Here, too, we must make our appeal to men's consciences; to their past and present experience; and ask them whether they are prepared to stand accountable for the consequences of their neglect, if they plead guilty to nothing more? A young man entering college to pursue this line, is destined to become a healer or a tormentor, a preserver or a manslayer, a blessing or a curse to society, according as the better or the worse dispositions of his nature are drawn out and fostered. What is the plan usually pursued by the more advanced in medical science towards a newly-admitted fellow student? is it not too often to extinguish every spark of human tenderness, to laugh


down every manifestation of lingering delicacy, and to bring from the most fearfully and wonderfully made of all God's stupendous works, arguments against the very existence of the Almighty Creator? If it be so, surely the evil must have a permanent abode in these halls of science, to taint, as it does, those who breathe their air, generally in proportion to the length of their sojourn.

The spectacle of that mysterious transition by which the soul abandons its earthly tenement, and leaves it to corruption and dissolution, is one of overpowering solemnity. None ever looked for the first time upon death, without a secret thrill of awe, if not of fear; and the impulse of our nature is to support and to soothe the dying in that moment of mortal conflict. The frequent repetition of such scenes must blunt the sensibility; and the necessity of watching the physical phenomena for professional purposes, will divert the thoughts from what is spiritual to what is visible; yet it is much to be lamented, that no provision is made for instruction suited to the emergency; for a course of teaching that should keep before the minds of these young




men, the solemn reality of what they mainly overlook,—the continued existence of the departed soul, its entrance upon a new stage, not upon a new state of being ; and its passage into one of those two great divisions between which a gulf is fixed, never to be crossed. Such considerations, habitually suggested, not as now repressed, would place all their fellow men more on an equality in their sight ; with a specially softening reference to those who have “ in this life received their evil things,” whether only as the beginnings of eternal misery brought on themselves by impenitent sin, or as the prelude to a glorious change of circumstances. We plead against national transgression, whether it be against God immediately, or through our brethren ; and this is an instance of the latter not to be overlooked.


Language would fail to set forth the extent of the blessing conferred, when he who ministers to the diseased body cares also for the soul of his patient. If any class of men are specially fitted to supply the lack of clerical attendance where it is most imperatively called for, that class is found in the medical pro-



fession. The doctor has constant access, even to the last gasp of his patient's breath : he is looked to with confidence, with reverence, with gratitude, if it be but apparent that he has done what he could to stay the progress of the malady. He knows when the faculties are in due exercise, and the feelings sufficiently awake, yet not too morbidly excited, to admit of an appeal to reason, conscience, judgment, such as the Gospel makes ; and let those testify who have experienced it, for they alone know, what is the joy of him who has been instrumental in leading a soul to cast itself on One mighty to save : to take refuge in that strong tower, the name of the Lord Jesus, while the king of terrors was poisoning the dart that no hand could arrest in its fatal course. No marvel that the power of Satan is brought to bear upon this branch of human science, with all the effect he can command ; that doubts of the soul's separate existence are among the first thoughts suggested by his diabolical craft, when the astonishing mechanism of the body, and the analogies traceable between every order of animal life, are laid open to the youthful en-




quirer. If the barb of unbelief can be but fixed in the mind of one man thus occupied, it not only wounds his soul, but obliterates from his thought all concern for his fellow men. He pursues his course, as one devoted, not to a noble work of pure philanthropy, but to a curious science, the successful practice of which will bring fame, emolument, and self-gratulation. It becomes his interest that his neighbours should be afflicted : a clean bill of health would be to him as a fiat of bankruptcy ; and having overcome the apprehension inseparable from a sense of future responsibility, looking upon his brethren of the dust as creatures of a day, to whom death is annihilation—a final deliverance from all suffering—he argues himself into a species of stoicism that makes him utterly reckless of the havoc he commits ; undermining sound constitutions among the wealthy, by the prolonged use of drugs, of which the only effect is, to keep them still on his list ; and sacrificing the poor in hecatombs by alternate neglect and cruelty. This is the character of a practitioner who has broken away from his allegiance to God, and set up the idol self as



the alone object of his service. The number of physicians and surgeons practising or preparing to practise in this empire, is immense ; and to each of these is committed the charge of many poor : indeed, there is not one among our sixteen millions whose life may not at any moment be placed at their disposal, so far as man holds power of life and death ; and can we omit to specify among national sins and national perils, the neglect of Christian instruction as a branch of medical education ?

Still let no man flatter himself that on the omission of another he may finally lay the guilt of his own ruin. The Bible is open to every one ; the church-door is open, and in this land no man can be ignorant that it is his duty to avail himself of both. Yet to how many is the word of God a sealed book, through their wilful neglect of its truths ; and the Sabbath chime an unmeaning sound, no more regarded than the stroke of the parish clock ! That a body of men whose every-day duty it is, even literally to stand between the living and the dead, should be, to all appearance, so reckless of eternal realities, is most strange. We admit that, of late years,



a striking improvement is visible, and that the number of truly pious practitioners is progressively increasing ; but to a very large majority we are constrained to apply the foregoing remarks ; and to remind them of the beautiful order of those graces, the exercise of which we so earnestly desire to see cultivated among them : “ We love God, because he first loved us : ” “ This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.” “ And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also.” Under this constraining principle, what a benefactor to his kind, and on how vast a scale of beneficence, is the Christian Physician qualified to become !


CHAPTER XVIII.

FEMALE INFLUENCE.

It is much to be wished that the mighty engine of female influence was more efficiently directed. The ladies of England are famed for tenderness of feeling, for decision of mind, for firmness of purpose, and promptitude of action. Their position in society is more commanding than that of any other females throughout the world: they comprehend our political or commercial objects, share our anxieties, and assist us by their intelligent counsel, to an extent which renders their power, for good or for evil, almost irresistible; and, contrasted with the insignificance of women in foreign lands, truly marvellous. No human beings, perhaps, are so quick at detecting injustice, resenting oppression, relieving the ne-

cessitous, and soothing the unhappy. Witness their efforts in the cause of negro freedom, at a time when it may be said all the female chivalry of England was up and striving ; nor did they once relax their hold of the driver's whip, till they had fairly wrested it out of his hand. In all our great national crises, has the feminine mind appeared clad with masculine energy, and evinced a fortitude, an endurance most admirable.

If, then, any man desires to advance the cause of justice and righteousness among us, but feels that his individual efforts can do little towards moving the unwieldy mass of prejudices and wrong principles encumbering our way, let him at least make it his business to bring before his female friends the leading points of our appeal ; and impress on them the importance of aiding in a work where they will find more to do, to undo, to alter and amend, than they are perhaps aware of. Setting aside their natural offices and responsibilities in the conjugal and maternal relationships, let us look at some of the duties springing out of their relative position in society. We shall find them either directly or



indirectly exercising the chief control over two exceedingly numerous and important classes : household servants, and the majority of tradesmen.

The first, our domestics, are so intimately connected with and affected by the prosperity, morality, and godliness of the country, that they may be said to form the universal cement of the whole fabric of society, so constantly present, so indispensably needful in every part. Usually taken from among the poorest classes (we do not here speak of gentlemen's gentlemen, or of ladies' own women) they bring into their new situations the ignorance, the prejudices, the evil habits of some whose fearful disadvantages we have been portraying ; and upon these they are sure, through the natural proneness of our kind to evil, to engraft whatever is easiest of acquisition in the faulty habits of their employers. Discharged from service, they perhaps, but not often, return to their former habitation, with these additions to the disqualifications originally carried thence ; and so to service again, with less probability of doing well than before. Too frequently, however, they yield to a

natural repugnance against returning in the character of unsuccessful adventurers to the miseries of a poverty-stricken home ; and in that case they go to a cheap lodging, with what wages they have in hand, reckless, vain, improvident, and a ready prey to any temptation. From this point their progress is either to lower depths of vice than they can ever again emerge from into respectability ; or else back to another service, perfectly qualified to mislead the more innocent, and to outdo the utmost stretch of their former misconduct.


We are here speaking of bad servants ; of those who form the inexhaustible theme of domestic complaint and vituperation. The class certainly increases, to judge by the increase of such complaints ; and there are others who add to their want of principle, so much duplicity and plausibility, that the mistress of a family will discharge a score of servants as incorrigible, keeping only one treasure of a creature always in her place, who is in reality the sole cause of her being unable to retain any body else. There are some whose conduct is the reverse of this ; faithful, honest, diligent servants, who repudiate needless

change, and would fain continue fixtures in the house. There would be very many such, if the ladies betook themselves to the work of more judiciously preparing, or more perseveringly reclaiming and improving the young people.

The first step towards service is generally a school, parochial, national, or otherwise charitable. Here the girls are instructed in needlework and spelling, and great pains are often taken to fit them for future usefulness ; but one or two evils have crept into the general system, which lead to much after mischief.

The first is emulation : children are pushed forward, commended and rewarded according to the readiness of their wit, which is often the worst qualification in a domestic servant ; so not a little of the pert self-sufficiency so annoying to their equals, and offensive to superiors, might be traced to a sort of pre-eminency attained at school, as a child of quick parts, clever and bright. The smile of applause bestowed on the most forward scholar often casts a cloud of abiding dulness over one of far more sterling character, and fosters in the former a spirit of vain assumption.

Besides, these advantages or advancements are gained at the expence of others : the successful candidate who, perhaps by chance, spells a word rightly which the preceding pupil had spelled wrong, takes the defaulter's place ; and secretly, if not openly, crows over a mortified rival. A day is probably devoted to scrawling out in the copy-book that edifying jingle, 'Emulation is a noble passion,' and this emulation is perfectly understood to mean a strife for the first place in the class. Thus are sown the seeds of pride, envy, and ambition ; to produce in after-life the captiousness, discontent, love of change, that characterize our domestics ; and worse things too : for those who want cleverness to surpass, generally have cunning enough to undermine their fellows. Hence, lying, slandering, backbiting, recrimination : the unutterable nuisance of kitchen-squabbles, which by their perpetual annoyance, create in the parlour an utter disgust of the whole class to whom the belligerents belong ; chilling the benevolent heart ; paralyzing the beneficent hand. Let such 'emulations' in schools fall into their assigned place, in the midst of "hatred, variance,




wrath, strife, seditions," and we shall speedily reap a benefit from the scriptural classification.

Another injudicious feature of school-management, is the practice of exhibiting the pupils, particularly girls, to visitors. To both sexes there is danger, on the ground already noticed ; the master will, for his own credit's sake, and that of the establishment, bring out for approval, not the best *boy* but the best *scholar* : and many a ringleader of the sedition in these days, owes his pernicious influence to the encouragement given by teachers, and the applause bestowed by examiners, when a good caning would have been the more appropriate recompence of his juvenile doings. A boy of slow parts, who to the fear of God adds a reverential regard for the powers that be, who would neither pilfer nor lie, and who, if fair pains were taken, might in after-life prove a blessing to hundreds, is left at the bottom of the class, put out of public view, or dubbed a dunce, and made a butt and a foil ; while some bold, bad spirit, intelligent and active, finds himself the theme of encomium whenever an inspection takes

place. True, he may be frequently punished, and justly reproached, both by master and pupils ; but that is among themselves ; it hinders not his shining before those of a higher rank, and throwing into the shade his more deserving compeers. These are the exact materials for a noisy, vulgar, blustering demagogue ; wise and courageous to do evil ; to do good equally unfit as disinclined.

But it is with the girls' schools chiefly we have now to deal, though female influence extends almost equally over both. Among these, personal appearance goes a great way ; and a very lovely dunce will catch more admiring looks, even from superiors of her own sex, than the best and cleverest of ugly damsels. It is thus the great enemy fashions his snares ; men, to do extensive mischief, must be master-spirits, bright, bold, and commanding : women for the same purpose must be attractive and insinuating ; and for both, the system of which we complain is alike fruitful in evil. With girls, appearance is every thing : she who has not beautiful features, may exhibit a fine form, a graceful manner, or so much taste in adjusting even the uniform of a



public school, or the bits of finery bestowed on her, as to elicit admiring commendation. It is not every lady whose discretion is sufficiently awake at all times to refrain from audibly expressing her thoughts ; but looks are still less guarded ; and the snare into which poor girls are most liable to fall and be fatally entangled, is absolutely woven for them by their first, best friends. The murmured expression, ‘ What a lovely little creature ! ’ from the lip of a kind lady-visitor, has often led a child’s mind into a track far remote from the path by which it is desired she should seek approval. She lies in wait for flattering remarks ; she peers oftener into a bit of glass than into her book ; she studies to set off her pretty face and figure ; and when in service, her main object is to fascinate the footman, or attract the baker’s lad ; too often she aims still higher ; and the master’s son, if not the master himself, is inveigled ; the downhill step is taken, and after contributing her full share to the vice and wretchedness and ruin of the age, she perishes.

But this is not all ; girls ought *never* to be accustomed to endure the public gaze. Fe-

male modesty is the surest of safeguards ; it is also the most evanescent. Observe how the Apostle links shamefacedness with modest apparel, sobriety, godliness, and good works. He not only commends, but commands its cultivation, as a necessary adornment of women : but who can expect shamefacedness long to survive the frequent stare of strangers, the premium constantly held out for a forwardness in speaking, and exhibiting, and striving for the pre-eminence among many competitors ? We have enough of complainings from the managing mistresses of families, generally proportioned in loudness and frequency to the extent of their establishment ; we see that the complaint is, in most cases, well founded ; we are persuaded that our grandfathers heard far less on the subject than we do ; therefore that the augmented evil is of comparatively recent growth ; and casting about for the cause, we cannot but be struck with the tendency of our prevailing school-systems to branch out into just such luxuriant weeds as entangle the domestic paths of our female friends. We might say a word too on the position of the exhibitors, as well as of the


exhibited, on these occasions ; but the foregoing will suffice in the way of a hint, to be followed up as each person's good sense may dictate.

So much for the training : what is past cannot be undone ; and what now is, will probably yet continue to prevail. We must therefore suppose that in general young servants enter on their sphere of duty with impressions and habits naturally resulting. What an epoch in the history of an immortal being ! What a noble field for holy benevolence to expatiate in, and what food for unavailing self-reproach if the opportunity be thrown away ! It is not our province, nor is it our wish, to enter into the details of domestic management, or to intrude where it may be taken for granted that the lady best knows her own duties ; but a few general remarks may be permitted, on a subject nearly affecting the well-being of all society.

'The vices of the lower orders' is a phrase in every body's mouth : that they are vicious in proportion to their ignorance is usually conceded ; but it appears questionable whether among the class under consideration, mis-


directed learning is not the more fruitful parent of incorrigible wickedness. The labours of infidelity, particularly in its most hellish form, socialism, have been vast and effective. Atrocities for which language affords no name—new discoveries in the foulest branch of crime—have teemed from the press and overspread the land. Perhaps no class of persons in the country is so exposed to the demoralizing system as livery-servants in London and other large towns. Their life is one of unmanly indolence ; their principal employment is to lounge in the streets, at the door of the fashionable shop, the private mansion, the theatre, the assembly-room, the club, the gaming-house ; on Sundays, if their employers happen to frequent a church, these neglected menials attend them to the door, and are in waiting with the carriage to take them up again ; who shall say how the intermediate hours are passed ? Not a day comes and goes in which they are not placed in the way of evil seducers. Their profanity, profligacy, and insolence, as a body, form one of our greatest public nuisances ; as any street-passenger can testify, and as the police reports

bear frequent witness. In the presence of their employers they must, of course, preserve a different deportment ; but what must be the position of a young girl, coming with all the coquetry of her sex and age, into the constant companionship of such fellows ; glossed over as their repulsive characters usually are with a sort of second-hand polish, reflected from the surface of the society in which they move as adjuncts ; and distinguished by smart apparel, supplied and devised by their superiors, purposely to set them off to the best advantage ? Surely no mistress who exposes her female domestics to such contact, without using any adequate means of protection on their behalf, without personal superintendence, which scarcely any lady now thinks of, and without kind cautions that need daily repetition in the midst of daily allurements, can justly complain of progressive demoralization among the defenceless class. Rather may she fear, lest in the day of the revelation of all things, there be found an unanswerable charge against her, of not rendering unto her servants that which was just and equal—of throwing them into situations of extreme danger, and pro-



viding no safeguard—forgetful that she also has a Master in heaven, who will one day call upon each of us to give an account of our stewardship.


Instead, then, of receiving a new servant as a necessary evil, and probable torment, to be borne with while she may, and then turned adrift, let the mistress regard her as a fellow-creature, destined to an eternity of blessedness or woe ; very likely to have been brought up in a way wherein she should not go, but affording an opportunity of doing her, and through her, perhaps, hundreds of others, a most important, enduring service. Nothing can be more gratifying, nothing more softening to the feelings of a poor girl, than to find the mistress whom she is bound to serve taking personal interest in her comfort and welfare. If the example set be a right one, the notice taken judicious, the counsel given kind and timely, there are very few even among those who may have gone far astray, upon whom an impression will not be made ; and if the poor menial be addressed as one who may by divine mercy be made rich in faith, and an heir of the kingdom of heaven, if the efforts made



are according to God's word, and attended by secret prayer, we do say that the lady whose handmaidens are taught thus to look to her as a guardian and a guide, is one whom many shall call blessed. She stands between the dead and the living to stay a consuming plague ; she may fail, in some instances, of her generous object ; but she shall not fail of what God hath promised to them that consider the poor, and to them that do justice, and love mercy.


There are ladies, and not a few, among the most accomplished, the most delicate in the land, who do this, habitually, constantly : they would not knowingly admit into their households a man such as we have described ; or a female who was not virtuous and modest ; but, aware of the deception practised, they are ever on their guard, and guarding those under their charge, lest any hypocrite should have crept in unawares to poison the minds the rest. They neglect no means for the suppression of evil and promotion of its contrary : they commence the day by placing themselves and their assembled household under the protection of the Almighty, who

alone knows what that day may bring forth ; who alone sees every snare, and can send deliverance from all. Where this first duty towards their own Master is neglected by the heads of the family, no marvel if they entertain little hope of inducing the domestics to render faithful service to them. Such omission lies at the root of all mischief, private and public ; nor can any success be reasonably looked for, where an office is undertaken without any reference to Him from whom all holy desires, all just counsels, and all good works do proceed. We should therefore have set out by urging on every lady the necessity of accomplishing the great preparatory step—family prayer ; but there are cases where the mistress of the house is baffled by a superior authority in her endeavour to bring this about ; and in the consciousness of desiring and striving after it, she must proceed without such important auxiliary. Of the too general custom of commencing the day's employments, and rushing into the world's temptations, without any recognition of the Creator, Saviour, Governor of men, we can only say that it amounts to virtually discharging our servants



from their allegiance to us, by shewing them that we have cast off our own to our heavenly King.

The mistress of the family should enquire into the character of the books in use among her dependents, and be careful to supply them with reading at once pleasing and profitable. A faithful housekeeper is no doubt a great treasure where such intermediate authority is required; but one who is herself a salaried assistant can never exercise over the inferior domestics the moral influence belonging to the mistress herself; neither can she so effectually fulfil this part of a duty which is not properly transferable. We do not say that in every house the servants would be benefitted in proportion as their mistress came under their personal observation; the reverse is sometimes the case, unhappily for both parties: but this ought not to be; and a more universal intercourse between the drawing-room and the servant's hall, however incongruous such expression may sound in ears polite, would operate as an insensible check on the pride, the passion, the indolence and selfishness of the superior, at the same time drawing out




her better qualities. We quit this subject, only remarking that the emphatic solemnity of the repeated injunctions given to the heads of families, in reference to their servants, throughout the Scriptures, leaves no room for any, however indisposed to these duties, to hope that their neglect of them shall escape the searching judgment of God.

In shopping transactions, including every thing connected with barter, a wide range of usefulness is opened to our countrywomen : and very many are the oppressive wrongs which a little circumspection on their part might materially restrain. The pernicious system of bargaining, to which the highest often condescend, and of excelling in which the wealthiest boast, is a great encouragement both to fraud and to cruelty. The tradesman who feels that he must either sell his goods below the price that would yield him a fair profit, or hazard the loss of a customer, and through her, perhaps, of many more, is tempted to compromise the matter by overcharging, probably some other person, ill able to afford any loss ; or to reduce yet farther the miserable remuneration of the poor labourers connected with his

business. It certainly induces many to price their goods beyond what is just, that they may the better afford to be beaten down by bargaining purchasers, to the actual robbery of such as would scorn to offer a tradesman less than he says the article is worth. It is a tax levied, not upon the pocket of the seller, but his honesty: the pecuniary loss falls on other buyers, or on the very poorest of the toiling poor.

And this call for interposition is especially urgent in a department principally under female patronage and control; one, where almost every lady in the land has power to interfere, at least negatively, by withdrawing her custom, and stating the reason of her so doing, where the offence is committed. Dress-making and millinery are, with few exceptions, carried on in establishments, and by means of young females, either apprenticed to learn the business, or employed on hire. It is utterly impossible to describe what this class of operatives undergo: physically, morally, and spiritually, their condition is heart-rending. The usual time of commencing work is six in the morning: what a walk through

drizzling rain, or piercing cold at that hour is, few of our fair friends have probably learned by experience ; much less what is then the state of the atmosphere in the localities where these poor girls usually have their dormitories, when the damp, heavy mist is surcharged with exhalations from every species of nocturnal and other uncleanness with which the neighbourhood abounds. They take their seats in a pent-up apartment, and there they remain, for at least sixteen hours, sometimes for forty, with scarcely a change of position, and, in general, only three quarters of an hour allowed for the comfortless meals, whether one or three, that they may take during the day : and when any press of work requires their continued labour through the night, a novel, or other exciting book, is read aloud to them to counteract the otherwise irresistible tendency to sleep over their work. Let it be borne in mind what is the position of these poor young creatures : seated, bending forward, their eyes constantly fixed on one object, their lungs inhaling an element vitiated in the extreme by the close confinement for so many hours of human beings




within its narrow limits, steaming with heat, and more or less infected with the fœtor of breath consequent on that derangement of the digestive organs which is inseparable from protracted sedentary occupation. To which may be added the very frequent instances of girls continuing to work in these departments even to the very last stage of consumption ; as, indeed, they must do, in order to provide themselves with the common necessities of food, clothing, and shelter. All this, with the subtle, imperceptible dust, the flue and floss ravelled off from the materials in use, steeped as they have often been in poisonous dyes, render the air of a dress-maker's working-room noxious beyond conception during the best hours of day. What it becomes when the fumes of gas or of oil take place of the small portion of circulating atmospheric air, now shut out by the closing of windows and doors, may be partly conceived. Yet in this genteel pest-house is the poor young creature cooped up, often without the intervention of a day of rest for weeks together. Ladies give their orders, enforcing a punctual delivery of the article within a given time,

frequently so limited as to preclude all possibility of Sabbath observance on the part of those engaged. Some employers do, indeed, clear their premises of the working-party on Sunday, resolved to secure their own holiday ; but each poor slave takes home a portion of work, which she must complete by Monday morning, or forfeit the privilege of earning her bread. It is a crying wrong ; a most murderous outrage, alike on the bodies and the souls of the sufferers ; and we are persuaded that many ladies would recoil with horror from their habitual line of conduct in this respect, could they but see at how fearful a price the punctuality which they enforce is secured.

The remedy for this, the liberation of thousands of slaves from a bondage that no English female ought to connive at, or to tolerate for one moment, lies in the hands of those whom we at present address through their male friends ; and is so easy of attainment, that we should be sorry to think it required more than a simple direction of their notice to the point. Announcing their determination to deal with such employers only as will

give a pledge not to impose on their work-women tasks beyond their natural strength, or such as can encroach on the appointed day of rest, they must also be prepared to give a fair price for what they require, enabling the dress-maker or milliner to employ more hands, with adequate remuneration for their toil. Care must also be taken to allow a sufficient time for the completion of the work. We know some ladies who effectually avoid giving any pretext for the sabbath-breaking system, by invariably issuing their orders early in the week, so as to insure their fulfilment before its expiration. This will go far in relieving such individuals from the fearful responsibility incurred by others ; but what we would demand is a combined effort for the amelioration of ills under which their countrywomen groan. The same selfish rapacity which lies at the root of all our national sins and dangers, gives rise to this abuse. To force the greatest possible amount of labour from the least possible number of labourers, is the one governing maxim ; and how would the fashionable lady loathe the costume that she most delights in, were the tears, the life-blood of



the poverty-stricken sempstress employed by her *artiste* in the details of its embroidery, and in the combination of its shapely proportions, made visible upon its surface: or, far more, could she there read the tale of ruin, temporal and eternal, to which the miserable sister of her nature is doomed, to swell the gains of a calculating directress! These things ARE: to be wilfully ignorant of them, or to know that they exist, and to take no decided step towards putting them away from before the eyes of the Lord God of Sabaoth, is a matter between the English lady and Him to whom she must give account, when all these glittering vanities have passed away, and nothing remain of them, but what is recorded in those books out of which the dead shall be judged.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.


ON glancing over what has been written, we are most painfully conscious of having left unsaid more than one half of what in duty we were bound to say, if the limits of the work would have admitted of it. We have not penetrated beyond the surface ; we have not filled out one department of the naked outline of our subject. With a heavy heart we commenced, and with an aggravated weight of sorrowful despondency we conclude this volume : for truly we have been met at every point by the appalling invitation addressed to the prophet, “ Turn again, son of man, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these.” We might have entered more into detail ; we might have brought powerful

arguments to bear on the various bodies of our countrymen who have passed under brief review ; but we felt that to lay open the general features of the whole case under the public eye, leaving each reader to follow up, as best accorded with his own opportunities, the branch concerning himself, would be better than to confine ourselves to a more limited range, even with the advantage of accurately surveying the whole of such selected ground. The graces of composition we have not aimed at—have not bestowed a thought on the matter. Our patriotism is not of that cast which could tune a fiddle while the surrounding country bursts into flames. Our warning note may be rough, and unmusical,—let it but startle the hearer, and we are content.

Among the many topics necessarily passed over, yet intimately connected with the perilous state of the land, because especially calculated to provoke divine vengeance, we will briefly allude to two or three, of very obvious character ; showing how inefficient are existing laws, or at least how ineffectually administered, for the suppression of enormous public crimes. And first, the impunity with which blasphemy

and obscenity exhibit their hateful forms in our open thoroughfares. Not long since, a young English gentleman was constrained to commit a breach of the peace for common decency's sake, and to vindicate the insulted majesty of God. For this he was, duly and necessarily, conducted to the bar of a public office, found guilty of the misdemeanor, mulcted by the magistrate, according to law, in the amount of damage done, and by that same magistrate publicly commended and thanked for the deed ; while every man, woman, and child in England, not wholly enlisted in the service of the devil, was bound to echo that commendation, and to join in those thanks. An anomaly like this could not for an hour be allowed to endure, if legislation were conducted, and its provisions enforced, as they ought to be. The horrors that day after day, and from month to month, sickened men's eyes, and polluted their minds with involuntary contamination, at the window of a literary hell in the very heart of the metropolis, after they had been reported to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and his interference earnestly implored, were too much for this

young man's endurance. He armed himself with a walking-stick, smashed the pane of glass, tore out the diabolical offence, and declared that if he could have found the owner of the shop he would have committed a further breach of the law by assaulting him ; which declaration he calmly repeated in the magistrate's presence, to the undisguised delight of all who heard him. Professing to deal in facts, we advert to this, and ask, Is the nation so strong as to cast off all dependance upon God, and connive at such insults against Him as must and will rouse His vengeance ? Are we reduced to such a pass as to make it desirable to see a body of men associated for the purpose of smashing windows, destroying private property, and assaulting their fellow-subjects ? Yet so it is ; England contains not a man worthy of the name, who would not cheerfully abide all the pains and penalties of her violated laws to remove from before the eyes of a professedly Christian people, from before the eye of Him whom they profess to worship, such loathsome abominations. We tremble at this branch of our multifarious subject, more than at any other ;



for amid all our provocations, which is immediately levelled at the very person of JEHOVAH but this? Which of all the sins that laid His own chosen and beloved people under a curse of nearly two thousand years' duration, approached it in turpitude? So long as any man can with impunity exhibit blasphemous and obscene publications in our streets—so long as he can, with the knowledge of the powers that be, vend them even in the darkest recesses of his den,—so long the magistrate beareth the sword in vain, and the national profession of religion is an impious farce.

“Be not deceived, God is not mocked.” There are other witnesses besides ourselves to these things; and when such a studied scoff at the Most High as this becomes inevitably known to the whole population by means of the public press, then it is that He will vindicate His outraged honour in the midst of us. Of all the cruelties that oppression can practise, the greatest is that of conniving at the moral and spiritual destruction of the young, the ignorant, the unguarded. The liberty that leaves a man free to administer a deadly poison to the soul of his neighbour,


is precisely of a piece with that which should sanction him in the shedding of his blood ; though we do not say that in kind it is not far more ruinous. The wretch, who was known to carry a knife for the purpose of promiscuous slaughter, would soon fall a victim to the instinctive self-preservation of those around him, if no law existed to disarm and punish him. But here, the son of a family who perhaps have carefully trained him in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, goes forth on his daily business, or for harmless relaxation, and is brought into contact with such defiling pitch that the mind which it has once touched can never regain its purity ; the thought that has been, unawares, led to contemplate but for a moment, the frightful juxtaposition of things most awfully sacred and holy with the filthiest abominations of some mind altogether given up to the possession of a legion of unclean devils, is thenceforward haunted by horrible temptations to entertain imaginations the very struggle against which is agony—the wilful entertainment of them death everlasting. Yet it is a trade, a regular traffic systematically carried on

throughout the land ; every man knows it, and no man has yet arisen to say ‘ It shall be so no longer : the iron shall not thus enter into the soul of the simple ; the labour of the careful father, the pious mother, the zealous pastor shall not thus be rendered vain ; the only legitimate source of all obedience shall not be closed up against the poor man’s access, and the floodgates of all anarchy opened upon him, to bear him away on its irresistible current.’

“ There is no power but of God : the powers that be are ordained of God : whosoever therefore resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.” So says the Scripture ; and what can follow, when the very being of the Supreme is called in question, His power, therefore, made a non-entity, His ordinances a lie, and damnation a jest ? What but a raging impatience of all control, and an eager appeal to physical force, whenever it is found preponderating against constituted authorities. The liberty of the subject is not secured but sacrificed, by the laxity of our laws in this respect. It is liberty conceded to a few, the very refuse and scum

of society, wretches, hateful to God and man, to insult, aggrieve, and destroy the bulk of our population. In lieu of protecting them in their nefarious traffic, why not protect the country from the defilement they spread over it, and its inhabitants from the sure vengeance of Him whose Holy Name is every where blasphemed, and His laws trampled under foot, by means of this intoxicating poison ?

Another of the most frightful features of the age, one that cannot be palliated by any species of sophistry when taken in connection, we will not say with the profession of national Christianity, but, with an ordinary regard to such public morality as heathens may be expected to enforce, is the system now prevailing at the theatres. Admitting that such performances could be, in themselves, unexceptionable—that they involved no breach of God's laws, no trifling with his Holy Name, nothing inimical to right principles, nor offensive to modesty ; and that the characters who tread the stage found in their occupation no particular snare, but were equally respectable and virtuous in all their grades, as any other class of persons who live by their own exer-



tions : (how far these points are admissible let the play-going community judge) still we have before us a spectacle of such moral turpitude as can scarcely be elsewhere equalled.

The great theatres of London are understood to be the most notorious brothels in the metropolis. However highly patronized and munificently supported by the regular contributions of those who frequent them, merely as places of amusement, and who may not be aware of the fact, their profits mainly depend on the success of a comparatively secret branch of the establishment—*i. e.* the saloons, to which the male part of the audience are allured by prostitutes, decked out for that purpose, *and for that purpose provided with free admission.* The scenery, dresses, and decorations, the music, dancing, and histrionic art, may combine their attractions, and assemble many ; who come and go, unconscious of the iniquities referred to ; but the experiment has been tried of carrying on the business free from this horrible adjunct, and the individual who attempted it found it impossible to proceed. It is not merely the opportunity afforded for making appointments with

intentions of criminal indulgence ; it is the deliberate plan ; the studied arrangement, the accommodation provided for carrying into effect every sinful purpose, without leaving the premises, that renders the outrage so appalling ; and that cries for vengeance as signal as is the provocation. In vain has the scene of depravity been repeatedly wrapped in consuming flames, and the whole fabric reduced to a heap of smoking ruins : still have we beheld the temple of obscenity again rearing its head, with extended facilities for guilt, and an outlay of increased amount ventured on to render the wages of shame more indispensable towards its re-imbusement. If a moral man, ignorant as some men really are, of these practices in the bosom of refined English society, were to hear the thing described, in connection with some heathen people in the uttermost parts of the earth, he would call for missionaries to proceed thither and enlighten the wretched inhabitants, by supplying them with the purifying knowledge of Christianity. But tell him that the place is London, the responsible parties gentlemen who perhaps roll by in their carriages to share

the hospitality of some nobleman high in place ; that the chief agents are those haggard girls, not yet adorned for the decoy, who sicken him as they cross his path ; and their intended paramours the young men, ay, and the old men too, who now pass them heedless or scornfully by—the father with the son, the husband with the brothers of those virtuous females who either do not know, or will not consider to what they expose their male companions, when encouraging them to venture within the poisoned atmosphere of the theatre—tell him all this, and what must be his dismay !

The whole proceeding is vitally objectionable ; the waste of time, which certainly was not given to be so squandered ; the waste of health, through hours of continuous excitement, protracted far beyond the period when nature demands repose, and in the close, heated, contaminated atmosphere of a thronged, gas-lit building ; the waste of feeling, taught to realize and to weep at fictitious woes, while many a mother shivers over her famishing babe, and many a daughter becomes a vile, a loathsome, and polluted thing in the streets


around, for lack of what they are squandering on the tinselled heroes of the stage. To this we may add the inevitable searing of the conscience, since the thing they take delight in is a studied lie : and the language to which they listen is almost invariably interlarded with unreal invocations of the name of the Most Holy,—with mock prayers, or indecent jests ; and a perpetual making light of the filial or conjugal duties. The immodest apparel, frequently including the exhibition of the female in man's attire ; the loose discourse, and familiar endearments carried on between persons of different sexes, and unconnected by any sanctioning tie ; with the known fact, that many of the most conspicuous and admired females live in a state of adultery or fornication, while the male performers, in general, are notorious libertines ; all this *must* tend to deaden the moral perception, and familiarize the mind to images of a description utterly opposed to all that ought to be cultivated in the character of a British maiden or matron.

Yet, in lifting our voice against the theatre, we incur the hazard of creating a prejudice against every other section of our book. We

regret this, but we cannot avoid it. A statement of facts must ever be unpalatable to some party ; and when we bring forward an instance where multitudes join hand in hand to go astray, multitudes will take offence. The plain test to which we desire every assertion made in this volume to be brought, is this : Is it true ? and if true, is it consistent with the word of God ? Beguile ourselves as we may on our journey through life, yet at the journey's end one rule will be found imperative on all ; and that rule is plainly before us in every stage of our course ; Jesus said, " The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." We may refuse now to plead before that strict tribunal ; we may openly declare, or covertly imply, that " We will not have this man to rule over us ;" but this is deception, puerile, miserable self-deception. Who, among us, asserting a householder's authority, would brook that certain domestics in his establishment should decide against submitting to that authority ; should frame rules for themselves directly opposed to his commandments ; should respond a dogged " I will not," or turn a deaf


ear, when he distinctly says ‘Do this,’ or ‘Abstain from doing that;’ and labour to seduce from their obedience a whole family, by example, if not by persuasion? Dismissal, instant and peremptory, would be the penalty; an extrusion of the offender, and strong reprobation of his evil course: And though not always instant, though the long-suffering of Divine mercy bears with us, as no one among us can bear with his fellow, yet who can doubt that the sentence will at last be uttered; and “Depart from me!” seal the offender’s doom.

Again, we would adduce another cause of offence, the weight of which is felt by many, and often complained of. The position in which a conscientious man finds himself placed when called to serve on a coroner’s inquest, is painful and perilous almost beyond conception. A fellow-creature has fallen by his own hand, under feelings of nervous excitement, perhaps induced by the enervating effects of a vicious life, perhaps by jealousy; perhaps by the pressure of the apprehension of actual want; perhaps by disappointment in some matter on which he has set his heart. The solemn oath is taken; and the




verdict must be given according to its provision, or the guilt of perjury incurred. If the case be returned as one of deliberate suicide, *felo de se*, the remains of the victim are, of course, and most properly, denied the accompaniment of that consolatory religious service which is provided for the interment of such as die in the Christian faith; the body will be buried in unconsecrated ground, and the effects of the departed will be forfeited, to the punishment of his innocent survivors; on whom also must fall the shame of consanguinity with one who has been publicly stigmatized as a felon of the worst description. These considerations, added to the piteous spectacle of the poor breathless corpse, the immortal tenant of which has gone to answer at the bar of God for a sin on which man really cannot inflict punishment, will weigh powerfully against the strongest conviction of the deliberate purpose with which the act was committed; and in every such case there are some ready to propose a verdict of temporary insanity. To justify this, it is pleaded that no man in his senses would rush into the presence of God stained with self-murder; and

whatever is found to have led to the desperate deed is charitably concluded to have first overpowered his reason. But now, a man who regards the awful sanctity of an oath may be led to ask himself whether, if the blow aimed by the individual against his own life had been levelled with like murderous purpose at the life of another, and with the same success, he should have felt himself justified in pronouncing a verdict of acquittal on the same plea of insanity? Whether the irritation of nerve, the jealousy, the disappointment would have rendered the criminal unaccountable to the law of the land as a wilful murderer; or whether the same pressure of distress, leading to a highway robbery, might have purchased for him the same immunity? If the reply be a decided negative; if he feel that no such excuse would have availed in a criminal court to avert punishment, then how shall he reconcile with his solemn oath a decision that he feels to be fallacious, and only arrived at through a desire to spare the feelings of others a cruel pang, or to save their property from confiscation? Still he will be urged on all sides; some attach such vast importance to



the burial service that they would deem it a fearful wrong to deprive a fellow creature of what is, in truth, a boon to the living, not the dead ; others plead the cruel injustice of adding loss and disgrace to the anguish of the survivors ; and in short, we find a majority always able to carry the verdict in the form that softens down a deed of the darkest guilt into one of pitiable infirmity ; and the man who planned the act with deliberate coolness, and perhaps wrote letters that only a sane mind could dictate, apprizing his friends of what he was about to do, is declared on the oath of twelve men to have acted under the influence of mental aberration, and pronounced guiltless in the face of the clearest evidence. This is a terrible perversion of a law framed for the best of purposes ; and a perilous temptation in the path of those who are compulsorily summoned to administer it : we do not wish to suggest a remedy ; but we must remind those who may have power to amend this law, that false swearing is repeatedly named in Holy Scripture among the things against which God will be “ a swift witness,” by taking very sudden and very terrible public vengeance.

Once more, what a frightful feature in our present position is the actual amount and the universal toleration of prostitution ! We are not about to enter into the revolting subject, or to trace the natural operation of certain popular theories in producing an enormous increase of this crime. We are not inclined to exhibit even a glimpse of the infernal dens where female innocence, yea, female infancy is daily entrapped, and destroyed with the full knowledge, and therefore, we say it boldly, with the guilty participation of public authorities. We just point to the squalid spectres haunting our streets, lately bright in the bloom of healthful life, now rapidly sinking, the prey of premature corruption, such as the tomb alone should know, into the pit :—and in imagination we would point also to the myriads of unmarked graves where the worm has finished his repast on the loathsome remains of their predecessors—and we ask, “ Who slew all these ? ” They were all slain, these dead ; and the dying, and those yet fresh in the horrible trade, are all doomed to a slaughter, violent, untimely, and doubly murderous. Where does the guilt rest ? A large



portion, undoubtedly, upon those who by oppressing the hirelings in their wages leave them no other resource: but this is not all. We should ill discharge ourselves of a solemn obligation if we failed to demand attention to a point of such exceeding urgency as this: always bearing in mind that England takes up her position as a country most emphatically Christian.


Disregard for the well-being of others is the main cause of every national offence committed among us: and no marvel, for it is the deliberate rejection of that one principle laid down in the word of God, as of paramount importance in man's dealings with man. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." We cannot set aside the evidence perpetually forced on our conviction, of a systematic departure from such rule on the part of employers in almost every existing branch of labour, of enterprize, and speculation. The proprietor, whether of land, of the mill, the mine, the ship, or in whatever possession capital is invested, the master tradesman, the journeyman overlooker, the purchaser in every

variety and degree, appear to be instigated by one desire ; namely, that of gain. Whenever a man begins to accumulate, be it by shillings or be it by thousands of pounds, the mania attacks him ; growing with the growth of his prosperity, and strengthening with the strength of his efforts. All, indeed, do not hoard their gains ; some freely spend, and some liberally give of their abundance ; but in all business transactions this fatal tendency preponderates, so that a man who should be known to act upon the Apostolic precept, " Why do ye not rather take wrong ; why do ye not suffer yourselves to be defrauded ? " would be universally set down as a fool whom anybody would be justified in punishing for his folly, by overreaching him. The only persons beyond the reach of this temptation are the very poor, who have not, perhaps, even a surplus crust to put by from to-day's meal, that tomorrow may not find them wholly destitute of such a thing. On these the burden falls : the dilapidated hovel, stripped of its little plot of garden, the long hours of work, the reduced wages, the parish pittance, pared down to the utmost, and reluctantly

doled forth, the studied cruelty of work-house regulations, all that embitters his cup of poverty, all that leaves his soul to its natural darkness, and the heart to its inbred corruptions, result from this. But because almost all orders of thinking and reading and writing men, are in some measure implicated in it, we find them all agreed in assigning some other cause, however contradictory in the result of their enquiries after it. One class finds it in the Corn Laws, another in surplus population ; a third in free-trade : some trace it in the position of the Church ; others in the policy of the administration ; while the stalwart masses who neither write books nor read them, feelingly convinced that, be the cause what it may, starvation is the effect, stand ready to place their enormous physical force at the disposal of any one who may persuade them that *his* panacea will operate to their permanent advantage.

Yet let us not wrong them ; their patient endurance of unparalleled privations has been wonderful ; and the reasonableness of their present demand, no honest man can deny. Give us, say they, a fair day's wages for a

fair day's work, and we will labour cheerfully in the lowly station where God has placed us. This is not to be ; the employer, surrounded with the luxuries that his successful speculations has brought within his grasp, pleads inability to remunerate the drudge, whose demand extends not beyond what God and man pronounce to be just. Machinery, multiplying and improving on every side, daily encroaches farther on human industry ; and with this exasperating spectacle before his eyes, the poor man knows that his demand is less likely to be listened to, as the proprietor becomes more independent of his services, through the active operation of wheels and pullies. If we could be assured that our starving millions had resolved quietly to lie down and die, there would be nothing to dread, save the slumbering bolts of divine vengeance, regarded probably as a flight of poetical fancy, rather than an annihilating reality to be manifested hereafter ; but no such determination has yet been announced by the sufferers, and divine retribution assumes some tangibility of shape, when we see human instruments ready prepared to the work.



The subject will doubtless engross much of the attention of the legislature during the present session : that their consultations may be directed to the advancement of God's glory, the good of his Church, and the safety, honour, and welfare of our Sovereign and her dominions, is a prayer that ought to issue from the ground of every heart. Meanwhile, this fact stares us in the face : England is in imminent peril ; she has within herself abundant means for the removal of all from which that peril springs, if each among her well-informed classes will do his duty, first by searching and trying his own ways, that he may return to the Lord in whatsoever he has departed from Him,—secondly, by using the full amount of his influence to disseminate right principles where they are obviously needed, through ignorance of truths which he can impart ; and thirdly by openly combining with such as are like-minded, to bring about improvements that we see to be essential to the permanent establishment on a right basis, of what now stands, tottering to its fall, on one as unsubstantial as it is unsightly. In all this, the word of God must

be taken for a guide : it is vain to place confidence in any other. The season of sunshine and of calm is too palpably past : the rain is about to descend ; the floods to come, and the winds to blow : they will beat upon our house, and that house must fall, unless it prove to be indeed founded upon a rock.

THE END.

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